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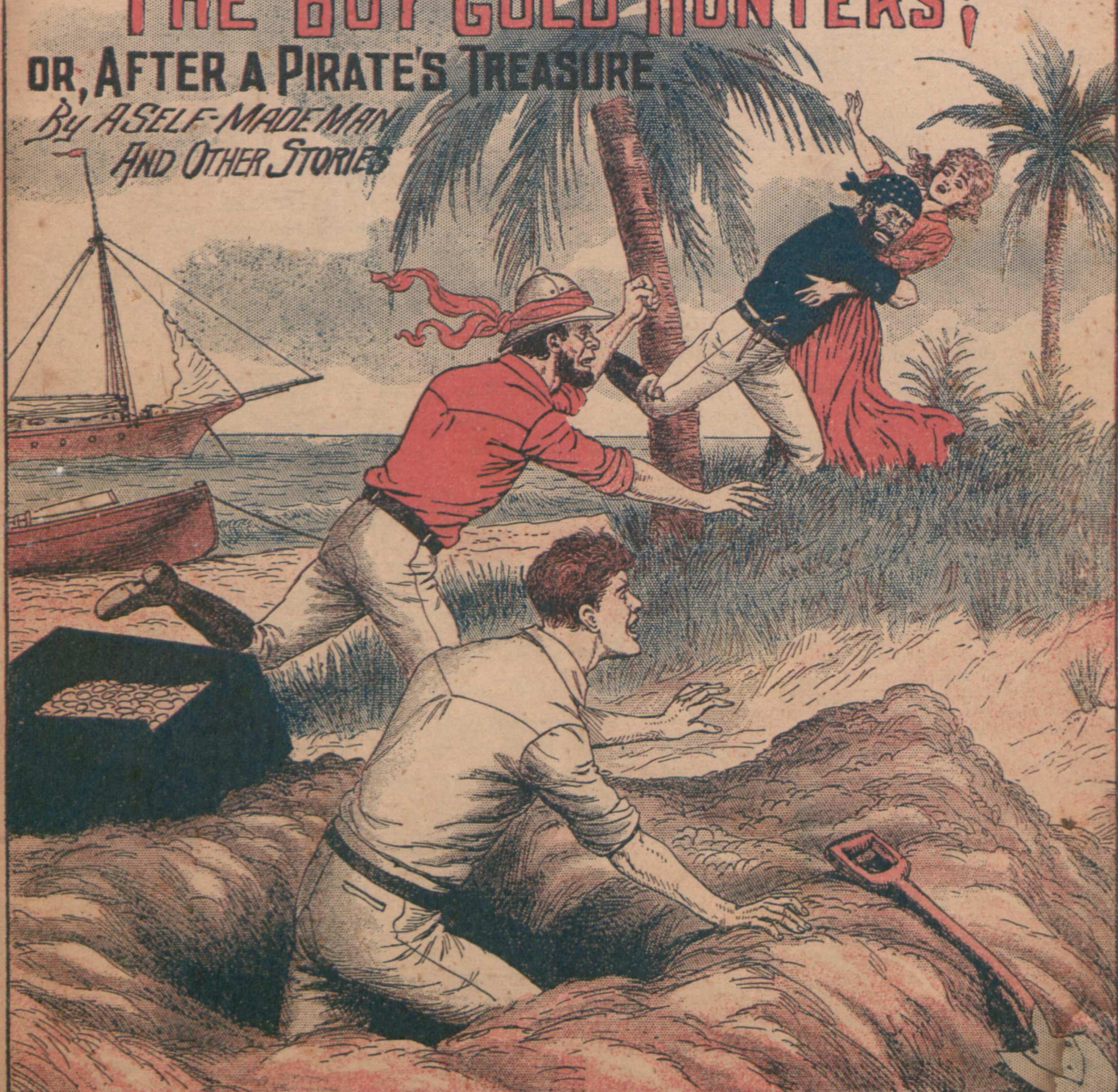
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FAME AND FORTUNE WEEKLY.

STORIES OF
BOYS THAT MAKE MONEY.

THE BOY GOLD-HUNTERS;
OR, AFTER A PIRATE'S TREASURE

By A SELF-MADE MAN
AND OTHER STORIES



"Help! Help!" screamed Grace as Quassamodo, seizing her in his arms, started for the underbrush.

"Drop her, you thafe of the wurruld!" roared McSwiggle, dashing after the negro.

The girl's screams brought Jack out of the hold in short order.

1960-1961
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RALPH P. SMITH
BOX 985
LAWRENCE, MASS.

FAME AND FORTUNE WEEKLY

STORIES OF BOYS WHO MAKE MONEY

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NEW YORK, SEPTEMBER 15, 1916.

Price 5 Cents.

THE BOY GOLD HUNTERS

—OR—

AFTER A PIRATE'S TREASURE

By A SELF-MADE MAN.

CHAPTER I.

JACK ASHMORE AND BOB OAKLEY.

"Hello, Jack! Going around for orders?" asked Bob Oakley, pausing in front of his particular friend, Jack Ashmore. They were on the principal street of the little, old-fashioned seaport of Clifton, on the coast of Massachusetts.

Jack shook his head gloomily.

"No? What makes you look so glum this morning?" went on Bob.

"I'm out of a job," replied Jack.

"Out of a job? How is that?" said Bob, in some surprise.

"Mr. Anderson has sold out the store."

"The dickens he has! Rather unexpected, isn't it?"

"I should say so."

"Who bought him out?"

"Eben Peckham."

"And wouldn't Mr. Peckham keep you on?"

"No. He's got a son who has stepped into my shoes."

"Well, what are you going to do?"

"Hunt for another job."

"Tending store?"

"I don't care what it is as long as I get enough to pay my board until something better turns up."

"How would you like to work for Nat Peaseley?"

"The boatbuilder?"

"Yes. He wants a helper. You know a whole lot about boats, anyway; maybe the job would suit you."

"I'd just as soon work for Mr. Peaseley as not. You are sure he wants a helper?"

"Yes. The young chap he has is going to leave to-morrow, and I heard Nat say yesterday that he would like to hire a clever boy to take his place."

"I'll go right over to his place and see him," said Jack, brightening up.

"And I'll go with you," said Bob. "He won't want you to-day, at any rate. Maybe we can borrow one of his boats and take a sail out to the North Shoals, where the wreck of the Spanish bark lies that went ashore there this spring. I'd like to see the craft. I've heard several boatmen, who visited her, say that she's an odd kind of vessel—something out of the common. Everybody aboard of her was lost except a big, burly negro, a native West Indian, who says his name is Quassamodo. He's been hanging around the Sailors' Rest saloon ever since, doing odd jobs for his board and lodging. A funny thing about him is that he goes out to the wreck nearly every day. What the deuce takes him out there is a mystery. He claims he goes fishing. Sometimes he returns with a mess of fish, but mostly he doesn't."

"I've seen the chap. He came into the store one day and bought a fishing line, a sinker, some fair-sized hooks, a small hatchet and some other tools. Mr. Anderson waited on him. I noticed that he wore a red handkerchief with big white

spots around his head under his hat, that he was large and strong, and altogether looked a good bit different from other negroes I've seen."

"That's right. Did you notice that he looks uncommonly fierce about the eyes? I wouldn't want to have a run-in with him."

"Yes, I saw his eyes. They're bad ones."

While the boys were talking they were walking down toward the water-front of the little village, which was only the big, nubby end of a long point of land, bounded on the easterly side by waves of the Atlantic, and washed on the westerly side by the waters of Boston harbor.

Looking across the low, intervening stretch of land to the ocean, they could see the North Shoals about three miles away, like a mere speck on the broad, blue surface of the water.

Nat Peaseley, the boatbuilder, lived in a cozy little cottage close to his shop, the door of which overlooked a small dock.

The boys passed the cottage and made straight for the shop, whence issued the sounds of hammering and scraping.

The tide was coming in, bringing to the shore many little waves that flashed in the sunlight as if they wanted to make the boatbuilder's dock as beautiful a place as possible.

There were two new boats in this dock, pulling away at their fastenings as if anxious to be away, and an old, weather-beaten catboat that the boatbuilder made sundry excursions in when there was nothing doing in the shop.

When the boys darkened the doorway Mr. Peaseley was making the chips fly from a short, thick piece of oak that was screwed tight in a vise attached to his work-bench.

His assistant was engaged on the frame of a good-sized dory that was on the stocks.

The boatbuilder was acquainted with both of the boys; in fact, had known them ever since they were big enough to venture outside their homes alone.

He knew that Bob Oakley lived in one of the best cottages of the village; that his father was cashier in an East Boston bank and drove every week-day morning to Winthrop and took a train there for the city, returning again late in the afternoon, and that Bob himself attended the Winthrop High School, but was now at liberty to enjoy the mid-summer vacation that has just set in.

The boatbuilder also knew that Jack Ashmore was an orphan, made so by the death of his father, a Boston pilot, five years since, and within the year by the loss of his mother; and he knew that Jack, who was a bright, good-looking, sturdy young fellow, had been working for nearly ten months in Mr. Anderson's store.

Mr. Peaseley was likewise aware that both boys dearly loved the water, but that Jack, who was a proficient boatman, now rarely found a chance to sail the blue waters as he used to do before thrown entirely on his own resources.

That morning he had been thinking that if he had his pick of all the boys he knew in Clifton he would readily select Jack Ashmore for his assistant, and he had more than half a mind to call on the boy and try and persuade him to give up his store job and come to work for him in place of the lad who was going to leave next day.

He was not surprised to see Bob Oakley walk into his shop that morning, for Bob was a frequent visitor, but he was surprised to see Jack.

"Good-morning, Mr. Peaseley," said Bob. "I see you're busy, as usual."

"Yes, I manage to find something to do most of the time, especially at this season of the year," responded the boatbuilder. "Hello, Jack!" looking at Ashmore, "it isn't often you get away from the store on a week-day morning."

"No, sir," replied the boy. "It isn't my fault that I'm away from it to-day, but the fact is I'm not working there any more."

"Not working there any more!" repeated the boatbuilder, in surprise, stopping work and regarding the boy with some curiosity. "Have you left Mr. Anderson?"

"Not exactly. Mr. Anderson sold out to Eben Peckham yesterday and my services are not required any more."

"Oh, that's it. Are you looking for another job?"

"Yes, sir. Bob told me that your assistant is going to leave you, and I thought I'd ask you to give me a chance here."

An expression of satisfaction came over the boatbuilder's face.

"Think you would like to learn the business?"

"Yes, sir."

"All right. I'll take you on. John will wind up here to-morrow. You can start in bright and early Monday morning."

"Thank you, sir," replied Jack, with a pleased look.

"And, Jack, I think you'd better move your traps to the cottage. Mrs. Peaseley has a spare room in the attic that you can have. It's rather rough and unfinished, but I reckon you'll find it as comfortable as the one you have. I shan't charge you anything for it, and your board won't be so much; that'll leave you something to clothe yourself with, and for pocket money."

"You're very kind, Mr. Peaseley," replied Jack, for the first time feeling glad that he had been obliged to cut loose from the store, which was not particularly congenial work to him. "I shall be glad to come and live with you."

"And we'll be glad to have you come," replied the boatbuilder, cordially. "It is only the other day that Mrs. Peaseley remarked—"

What he was about to say was cut short by the appearance of Mrs. Peaseley herself, a pleasant-faced little woman of five-and-forty, at the door.

"Come in, Cynthia," said her husband. "There's room enough for one more."

The lady nodded to the boys, whom she knew well, for everybody knew almost everybody else in Clifton, and walked in.

When Mrs. Peaseley had delivered her message to her husband, Mr. Peaseley surprised her with the news that Jack Ashmore was coming to work for him on the following Monday.

"And he's going to take that room in the attic and board with us if you haven't any objection, Cynthia," added the boatbuilder.

"Objection? Of course not," replied the lady, cheerfully. "I'll be real glad to have you come, Jack. I'll treat you just as if you were our own son."

"Thank you, Mrs. Peaseley," said Jack, gratefully.

"I'll go and fix your room up right away and you can move in to-morrow if you wish to," said the boatbuilder's wife.

"Thank you, ma'am, I'd be glad to do so."

Mrs. Peaseley went back to the cottage and the boys went outside and sat down on a couple of blocks of wood.

"You'll have two days, besides Sunday, to yourself, Jack," said Bob. "We can go over to the North Shoals to-day, and up to Boston to-morrow if you say so."

"I'm willing," replied Jack.

"Go in and ask Mr. Peaseley if we can have the use of his catboat this afternoon and to-morrow. You can tell him where we're going. You can come up to my house and have lunch before we start."

Jack rose to do his companion's bidding, but had only taken a couple of steps when Bob called him back.

"Look yonder," pointed Bob. "There goes that nigger Quassamodo in Tom Brown's sailboat. He's bound for the North Shoals as sure as anything, and is liable to remain there all afternoon. I guess we won't go there to-day. We can start out early in the morning instead. We'll go to Boston to-day and we'll start right away. I'll treat to lunch when we get there."

Jack easily prevailed on Mr. Peaseley to let them have his boat for a trip to the city, and fifteen minutes later they were spinning over the waves, bound westward.

CHAPTER II.

THE TREASURE CHART.

Right after breakfast next morning Bob Oakley appeared at Jack's lodgings and helped him carry his trunk and other belongings down to the boatbuilder's cottage.

It was a story-and-a-half cottage.

Over the front door was a trellis that the vines of a honeysuckle had mounted.

At the windows of the kitchen stood rows of geraniums in luxuriant bloom, while the little garden was fairly alive with blossoms.

Jack was delighted with the idea of living there, thinking he should be perfectly happy from that time out; but then he didn't know what was before him.

Neither he nor Bob guessed, as they sailed from the boatbuilder's little dock for the North Shoals an hour later, that they were taking their last look at dear old Clifton for many a day.

They did not even take the trouble to look back at the receding land, and the houses on it; the long wharf where the Nahant excursion steamer put in twice daily, nor the fishing smacks swinging idly at their anchors close inshore.

They would see all these familiar objects when they came back after tiring of the wreck on the North Shoals, and of the fishing they expected to do afterward.

The ocean was ruffled by a light breeze which favored their outward progress, and the two boys enjoyed the sail immensely.

As they approached the shoals the bows of the derelict came into view.

She had run clean up on the rocks and her stern was also exposed at low tide.

A big red-and-black striped buoy was anchored at either end of the shoals.

They were known as bell-buoys, for a bell was suspended at the top of each.

When the wind blew a stiff breeze, and the water was agitated about the shoal, the heavy clappers swung to and fro with the nodding of the buoys and sent forth a hoarse and melancholy knell.

Their notes of warning, however, had not saved the Spanish brig.

She went on North Shoals in a dense fog late one spring afternoon, and there she had stuck ever since.

She was an ancient-looking craft of foreign build, but for all that she had been put together in a way that defied many a gale while she lay helpless on the shoal.

Jack steered the Sunbeam, which was the name of Mr. Peaseley's old catboat, with due caution through the intricate navigation of the shoal, and they soon glided up alongside the wreck.

They didn't take the trouble to lower the sail, as that wasn't necessary, and while Jack held the boat close to the derelict's side by grasping one of the many ropes that dangled over the fractured bulwark, Bob sprang aboard with the painter and secured it to a ring-bolt.

Then Jack jumped on board himself, and the boys proceeded to survey the brig.

After they had satisfied their curiosity on deck they went down into the cabin, for the tide was low and the water had receded, leaving a dank, seaweedy smell behind.

The doors of the different box-like staterooms stood wide open, the larger one, standing abaft, having without doubt been the captain's.

"I'll bet the reason why that darky comes here is to pick up such odds and ends of value that he knew lay about," said Bob.

"Don't you believe it. This brig was cleaned out long ago, either by the negro during his first trips, or by the boatmen and fishermen of Clifton. This wreck has been here nearly

four months. You don't suppose anything of value would last as long as that."

"That's so," admitted Bob. "I wonder what brings him here, then?"

"Are you positive that he comes here?"

"The fishermen have repeatedly seen him aboard the wreck."

"Oh, if they have I suppose that settles it. We've seen all there is on exhibition down here, so let's go forward and take a peak into the fo'k'sle."

Accordingly they left the cabin, and glad they were to breathe the sweet sea air again.

They went forward and descended into the quarters once used by the dead crew.

The short pair of steps was still in its place, and down this they tripped.

The air of the "sailors' parlor" was altogether different from that of the cabin, because it stood high and dry above the highest tide.

Besides, there were a number of fractures in the brig's bows that admitted the air currents as well as slants of sunlight.

Every bunk in the place had been demolished clean and clear, as if done on purpose, and the wood which they had been composed of lay in disordered fragments against the bulkhead that separated the fo'k'sle from the hold proper.

"Looks as if some one has been amusing himself here with a hatchet," remarked Bob. "Must have been Quassamodo, though what fun he could find in it is beyond me."

"Look at the heel of the bowsprit, Bob. That's been hacked away as though some one wanted to see what it was made of," said Jack.

"Or to find out if it was hollow," added Bob.

"Here's the hatchet and chisel that did the work, lying among the chips. They came from Mr. Anderson's store, so it must be the negro who has been using them, for he bought the identical articles there, as I believe I told you yesterday."

"He must have an object in all this," said Bob, scratching his head.

"Probably, but I'm not going to worry my brains trying to study it out."

"But I'm dead curious to know," said Bob.

"I don't see how you're going to find out unless you ask the darky, and he should tell you."

"You wouldn't catch me asking him," replied Bob. "Not on your tintype."

"Then what are you going to do about it? Here he's been cutting out a hole right under the bowsprit."

"He's looking for something that's been hidden," said Bob.

"Funny place to expect to find hidden articles, don't you think?"

"Yes, but still there appears to be some method in the fellow's search. There is a space between the under part of the bowsprit and the sheathing of the brig. It would make a good hiding-place."

"But anybody wishing to utilize it for any purpose could not reach it without making just such a hole as the darky appears to have done, and that would give it away at once."

He wouldn't have taken the trouble to demolish all those bunks if he wasn't looking for something that he believes to be hidden down here. He's hot on the job, too, or he wouldn't come out here so often."

Jack picked up the hatchet and looked at it with a critical eye.

"It's been subjected to hard usage," he said. "The edge is almost turned. I wonder if I could make it stick in that foremast yonder if I was to throw it tomahawk fashion?"

"Why don't you try it. I'll bet you can't even hit the mast."

"How much will you bet?"

"A dime."

"I'll take you up, but I want three trials."

"You can have them, but you must strike the mast with the steel part of the hatchet or it doesn't count."

"I'll agree to that. Put up your dime."

Bob fished one out of his pocket and Jack covered it with a similar coin.

"This will be just like finding a dime," grinned Bob.

"Don't be so sure of that," retorted Jack, preparing to take aim at the mast. "I've got a sharp eye."

"I'll bet it isn't sharp enough to cut soft butter," chuckled Bob.

"It's sharp enough to win that dime of yours, and that's what I'm interested in now."

"I'll bet you another dime that you don't win," said Bob.

"You're getting reckless with your money. I don't want to rob you or I'd take you up."

"Ho! You're afraid to take me up!"

"I never take such a dare, Bob. I haven't got another dime, but I'll put up a quarter flat that I hit that mast fairly once out of three trials."

"A quarter goes," replied Bob, and the money was put up.

Jack squared himself, took aim and let the hatchet go.

"Missed!" shouted Bob, gleefully, as the implement whizzed past the mast and buried itself in the bulkhead.

"That's only one trial, and I came pretty close to it, anyway," said Jack, as he went after the hatchet.

His second attempt was a miss also, and worse by several inches than the first.

"I told you that you couldn't hit it," said Bob. "I could do better than that myself with my eyes shut."

"You could do a whole lot, Bob, I know. But here is where I win your money."

Jack took careful aim on his final trial and flung the hatchet with all his might.

This time it went as true as a die.

The sharp edge of the implement struck the mast squarely and remained quivering in it.

"How is that?" cried Jack, triumphantly.

"You couldn't do it again," said Bob, disappointedly, as his friend picked up the two quarters and dropped them into his pocket.

"I could do it so often that I'd win all your money without any trouble."

The boys walked over to the mast and Jack loosened the hatchet.

"Hello!" he said. "That mast looks hollow. Never heard of a mast being hollow before."

"Nor me, either. It can't be really hollow. Must be just a hole. Maybe the wood is rotten in that place."

Jack began to dig away and enlarge the split the hatchet had made.

"I guess you're right about it only being a hole, Bob, but it looks as if the hole was made there by someone and then carefully closed up."

"Open it up, then. Perhaps there's something hidden there, and that is what the negro is looking for," said Bob, in some excitement.

"Go and get me the chisel," said Jack.

Bob got it in short order.

Jack applied it around the edges of what looked like a plug, and in a few minutes he dislodged the piece of wood and exposed an opening inside the mast.

Feeling inside with his fingers, Ashmore drew out a small folded piece of coarse paper, and a piece of round, hard wood, four inches in length, about which was carefully wound a long, thin line, full of knots.

There was nothing else in the hole.

"Anything in there?" asked Bob, eagerly.

"This," replied Jack, showing him the two articles he had found.

"Bring them to the light and let's see what they are," said Bob. "I thought probably that it was money or something equally valuable. It doesn't strike me that the negro would be hunting for a piece of paper and what looks like a fishing line."

They sat on the second of the forecastle steps, and Jack, laying the cord-wrapped wood on his knee, carefully opened the stained piece of paper.

Smoothing it out, they both looked at what appeared to be a rude chart of an island, with figures traced at one point, and objects that resembled an amateur's attempt to delineate trees and other landmarks.

"What the dickens does that stand for, anyway?" asked Bob, clearly puzzled by the drawing.

"Looks like a rough chart of an island," answered Jack.

"How do you know it's an island? I don't see anything to indicate water," said Bob.

"This blank space all around it is probably meant to be water."

"Ho! Whoever drew that, if he meant that for an island, ought to have written across it, 'This is an island.'"

"Evidently he didn't consider that necessary. Probably he just drew it for his own use, and as he knew it was an island himself he didn't need to state the fact."

"What's that thing out there in the water, as you call it?"

"I should say that was intended to represent a schooner."

"A schooner!" cried Bob, scornfully.

"Yes. That line represents the hull, and those two uprights stand for masts."

That's a bum schooner. A five-year-old kid could draw a better one. What does the whole thing amount to, anyway?"

"Do you know what I think it is?" said Jack.

"No. What do you think it is?"

"A treasure chart."

"A treasure chart!" echoed Bob, rather mystified.

"Yes. I believe that shows where some pirate's treasure has been buried."

"What!" cried Bob, snatching the paper and regarding it with new interest, while Jack dropped the piece of wood with the line around it into his pocket. "A pirate's treasure! There ain't a bit of writing on it. How could anyone find a treasure with that?"

"The man who drew it probably could. I'm going to keep it as a curiosity, anyway."

As he took it out of Bob's hand and placed it in his pocket, they both heard the sound of footsteps on the deck overhead.

In another moment the opening in the forecastle was darkened, and looking up the boys beheld the wicked-looking countenance of Quassamodo glaring down at them.

CHAPTER III.

QUASSAMODO.

"Ha! You two boys, what you do 'board dis brig?" asked Quassamodo, showing two rows of glistening teeth in a way that was decidedly unpleasant.

"What's that to you. Mister Quassamodo, if that's your name?" asked Jack, boldly.

"Yah! Quassamodo my name, all right. Me s'pose you hab name, eh?" said the black, with another unpleasant grin.

"That's as much as to say you want to know who we are?" replied Jack.

"If you be so kind me take it as great favor," grinned the West Indian.

"Gee! He's awfully polite, isn't he?" whispered Bob.

"Well, my name is Jack Ashmore, and my friend here is Bob Oakley."

"You lib in Clifton, you two boy, eh?"

"Yes, that's where we live."

"Berry well. S'pose you take um boat 'longside and go back where um come?"

"We were just going when you turned up."

"Berry good. Me no 'tand in um way. Come up. No 'tand no ceremony with me. Quassamodo berry fine man in um own country, but here me out ob water," and the black grinned wickedly, as if he thought what he said was a fine joke.

"Come along, Bob," said Jack. "Let's get out of here."

Quassamodo stood aside for them to pass.

"S'pose you hab curiosity what Quassamodo do 'board um brig, eh?" grinned the West Indian. "Me lookin' for lillie bit property dat me lose when brig run foul of um rocks. Under'tand?"

"Looking for something you lost, eh?" said Jack.

"Dat right. No worth anyt'in' to anybody else."

"You chopped all the bunks away down there, then?"

"Me no deny dat. T'ink probably me leave um property in one ob dem, but forget which, so me chop um in lillie bit to find out."

"What did you chop away the heel of the bowsprit for? Expect to find your property there?" asked Jack, with a chuckle.

The West Indian darted a wicked look at him, then he said:

"No. Me just try hatchet on um to see if um sharp."

"Well, you made chips enough to start a bonfire."

"S'pose dat you no tell all dat um see in de fo'k'sle, me t'ink you nice gen'lemen. In dat case 'fore me lieb country me pay um visit and give lillie present."

"Oh, we won't say anything. Why should we?"

"Dat right. What good you talk 'bout what no 'portance to um? You two boy make berry fine man some day. P'raps um get to be ruler of um country," grinned the West Indian.

"Yes, I expect to be elected grand exalted high muck-a-muck," laughed Jack.

"Berry good. Quassamodo visit you den and pay um best 'specta."

"That's right. I'll pick out a soft job for you."

They had reached the side of the wreck by this time and so Jack and Bob listened to get into their catboat.

"Good-by, Mister Quassamodo," sung out Jack, as the boat fell away, "we'll see you later."

"Me wish you berry good mornin', young gen'lemen, and pleasant sail. S'pose you hab anyt'in' to say to me some time me berry glad to see um at Sailors' Rest."

"Say, he's a cuckoo," grinned Bob. "Mighty polite with his mouth, but I watched his eyes—put me in mind of a snake's. I'll bet he's a treacherous rascal. I wouldn't trust that chap any further than I could see him, and not even as far as that."

"Yes, I guess he's a hard case, all right. What will we do now? Try a spell of fishing? We ought to get plenty of bites around the shoal."

"That's what we expected to do, isn't it?" said Bob, going into the little cabin for the lines and bait.

Jack glanced back at the wreck and noticed the West Indian still standing on deck watching them.

He headed the Sunbeam to the edge of the shoal and then circled around to the seaward side of it, where he lowered the sail and cast the anchor.

The next time he looked at the wreck Quassamodo had disappeared.

"He's gone down into the fo'k'sle to resume his work," thought Jack. "I wonder if it is the treasure chart he is after? If so he'll never find it now. It's too bad that it isn't more definite. Not a word of writing on it to show what the name of the island is, or where it is located. I don't see what good it is as a guide to anyone but the chap who drew it, supposing my guess is correct that it really is a chart referring to some hidden treasure. I'll show it to Mr. Peaseley and see if he can make anything out of it. He's an old sailor, and might be able to discover something in it that I can't."

Bob now appeared with the fishing lines and can of bait, and the boys were soon angling for the fishy denizens of the deep.

Jack got the first bite, and was pulling in a wriggling mackerel, whose silvery-striped surface shone in the sunshine, when both boys heard a shout behind them.

They looked in that direction and saw Quassamodo standing by the bulwark of the wreck, making furious gesticulations at them.

"He wants us to come back," said Bob.

"He'll have to take it out in wanting, then. We're not going to pull up stakes when we've got down to business just to oblige him."

So the boys paid no attention to the West Indian, but went on fishing.

"Hello!" exclaimed Bob, a few moments later. "He's coming over to us in his boat."

"Let him come," said Jack, indifferently.

Bob, however, kept an eye on the black man.

He didn't relish the idea of a visit from him, for he distrusted and feared the fellow, who looked capable of committing any crime.

Quassamodo sailed his small craft up close to where the Sunbeam was moored.

"Ha! You two boy!" cried the black. "Why you no answer when I 'dress you, eh?"

"We're fishing," replied Jack, coolly.

"Me no care what um doin'. Look here, me want to talk to um."

"All right, talk away, but don't come too close, or you'll scare the fish," said Jack.

"You two boy pay 'tention," replied the West Indian, in a savage tone. "Why um take hatchet in fo'k'sle and break um mast open, eh?"

"Just for fun," answered Jack.

"Fun, eh? Why for you 'ticularly pick out mast? Answer dat, sah?"

"What difference does it make to you?"

"No talk dat way to me. Understand? Me no put up with it," cried the West Indian, looking decidedly ugly. "Me want to know what um find in mast."

"What ought we to find in a mast but wood?" retorted Jack.

"S'pose you t'ink you hab fun with Quassamodo, eh? Me show you dif'rent," cried the black man, hauling his sail so as to bring his boat alongside of the Sunbeam.

"Keep off, will you?" shouted Jack.

"Yah! Me keep off when um give up what um found."

"You go to grass," replied Jack, whose spunk was up. "If

you meddle with us we'll have you arrested when we get back to the village."

The West Indian showed his teeth ferociously.

"S'pose you no get back to village? What den? You give up what um found 'board brig else me pickle um and toss overboard to um fishes."

The situation began to look decidedly threatening to the boys, and Bob showed symptoms of nervousness.

"Give him the old things, Jack," he said, in a low tone. "They're no good to you."

"Give him nothing," growled Jack. "No rascal of his stripe is going to bulldoze me."

The boy laid his hand on a stout club that he saw under the seat and prepared for action.

"Now, den, me take what you found," said the black, as his boat swept alongside. "S'pose you no give, den me take."

Jack sprang back out of his reach as the West Indian grasped the side of the Sunbeam.

"Me no got time to waste arguin' de matter. Hand over, or you see what um do."

"What will you do?" retorted Jack.

"Ha! You t'ink me no mean business, eh? Me show um!"

The West Indian jumped to his feet, and as he put one leg over into the cockpit of the Sunbeam he drew an ugly-looking knife, about eighteen inches long.

That was enough for Jack.

He acted so promptly as to astonish Bob, who had sprung toward the cabin in great alarm.

He swung his club at the black man's arm, catching him a sharp blow on the wrist.

The knife went hurtling through the air for a dozen feet, struck the water with a splash, and sank out of sight.

The West Indian uttered a furious cry of baffled rage, darted a venomous look at Jack and sprang into the Sunbeam, intent on vengeance.

CHAPTER IV.

THE SECRET OF THE TREASURE CHEST.

Jack had no intention of permitting him to come into close quarters if he could help it.

He was a boy of undoubted nerve and courage.

He saw that the black was keyed up for mischief and he determined to get the first blow in even if it was his last.

Accordingly he swung his club again, and the heavy end caught Quassamodo alongside of the ear.

Jack meant business when he struck out, and consequently the blow was a heavy one.

Quassamodo went down stunned in the boat.

Jack then reached out and grabbed the black's boat before it had floated out of reach.

"Now, then, Bob," he said. "Help me toss this rascal aboard his craft."

"Gee! You've got more backbone than I have, Jack," said Bob, as he came toward the unconscious West Indian. "I'd have given up what he wanted. I don't see what good it is, anyway."

"No matter about that. He has no right to it. It's a case of finders keepers. I don't allow anyone to sit on my neck if I can hel' it. Grab him, now, and over with him into his own boat."

Quassamodo was tumbled into the other craft.

"What are you going to do now? Cast him adrift?"

"No, that wouldn't do. The tide might change before he'd drifted in far enough to be picked up by one of the smacks. We'll have to pull up anchor and tow him back to the wreck, where we'll tie the boat to one of the ropes."

"When he comes to his senses he might come after us again," said Bob.

"I don't think he'll bother us any more to-day. If he does we can easily fight him off."

"I'm afraid he'll lay for you on shore and do you an injury. He's a wicked rascal. If you hadn't knocked that knife out of his fist in such a neat manner he might have stuck you."

"Don't you worry about me, Bob. I can look after myself. I'll have one of the constables take him up on the charge of murderous assault when we get back, and you will have to go before the magistrate with me to corroborate my statement. He'll be taken care of for some time at the expense of the State."

"But he'll get out some time, and then look out. Those kind of chaps have a long memory."

"Don't let's bother about the future. The present is what

I'm most concerned about. Just lower the sail on his craft, will you? and then we'll lift the anchor."

Bob let the sail down with a run, but did not bother with tying it up.

After that they got the anchor aboard and towed the craft alongside the wreck, where they made it fast.

This accomplished, they sailed to another part of the shoals and resumed their fishing.

About noon they had quite a catch of mackerel and other fish, and then they stopped for dinner, which they had brought with them.

After the meal they found that the fish had ceased to bite.

They would have hoisted their sail and made back for the village, but a dead calm had fallen on the face of the water and all were obliged to remain where they were.

During all this time there had been no sign of Quassamodo or his sailboat, which was moored on the other side of the wreck.

The boys made a kind of awning of their sail and squatted down underneath it.

The fish they had caught flapped around in a tub partly full of water, which they had brought along to receive them.

The period of slack-water having passed, the tide commenced to run out seaward again, and the Sunbeam was soon pulling gently at its mooring rope.

Jack pulled the supposed treasure chart out of his pocket, and looked it over more carefully than before, but could make little out of it.

Within an irregular, oblong circle were to be seen a cross, a rude tree, five small crosses in a line, and a circle near them. That was all.

"That cross there, between the tree and the shore, is probably where the treasure is buried," he said; "that is, if this chart has reference to a treasure."

"What makes you think it has?" asked Bob.

"It is merely a supposition on my part. I used to hear a whole lot about treasure charts from the sailors around the village. They said there were loads of treasure which had been buried years and years ago, particularly on the small islands or keys of the Caribbean, that had never been recovered by any one, and probably never would be. The fellows who buried the money and other articles of value always made a rough chart of its location so that they could find their way back to it when they wanted to. For various reasons they didn't always get the chance to go back and dig it up, and, consequently, lots of the treasure still remains where it was originally put."

"I've read stories about pirates' treasure," said Bob, "and I always found them very interesting. But, of course, they were not true."

"I've read true stories about the buccaneers or pirates of the Spanish Main," said Jack, putting the chart down where the hot sun shone full upon it. "They were a bloodthirsty lot in those days. They must have acquired an awful lot of wealth, for they used to rob every silver ship they could overhaul. In those times the South American and Mexican mines were turning out fortunes in pure silver, which was melted into ingots and shipped to Spain in galleons, as they were called."

"Do you know how those pirates came to be called buccaneers?" Bob asked.

"It originated in the word buccanning, which was a peculiar process for curing cattle flesh by jerking, salting and drying in the sunshine. This process was in use in many of the islands of the Caribbean Sea in those early days, particularly in the Island of Tortugas. The original buccaneers were, therefore, honest enough men, until their business was broken up by the Spaniards. Then in revenge they took to the sea in small, fleet vessels, and got back at their persecutors by capturing and plundering the rich Spanish ships then sailing those waters. They were the scourge of the Spanish trade and Spanish towns for a long time, and the name buccaneers stuck to them after they became pirates."

"Where did you read about them?" asked Bob, much interested. "I'd like to find out more about them."

"In an old book called the 'Buccaneers of the Spanish Main.' An old sailor, who is dead and gone now, loaned it to me before my father died."

"I suppose there's no chance of finding that book now, is there?" asked Bob, eagerly.

"I couldn't tell you who's got it now. You might find a copy, or something similar, in a second-hand book-store in Boston."

"I mean to look it up."

"Stick your head up, Bob, and see if there's any sign of a

breeze in sight," said Jack, reaching for the treasure chart to put it back in his pocket.

When his eyes rested on it he uttered a gasp of astonishment which attracted his companion's attention.

"What's the matter?" asked Bob.

"Look, Bob, look at that paper!" said Jack, pointing at the chart.

Bob looked and he gave an exclamation of surprise.

A wonderful change had come over the rough chart.

Where before there had been nothing but blank space there now appeared words and figures, staring them in the face, while the paper itself was slowly curling up under the heat of the sun.

"My gracious!" cried Jack.

"Chuck it overboard," ejaculated Bob; "the derned old thing is bewitched!"

Jack snatched the chart up, but instead of following Bob's suggestion, he smoothed the paper out across his knee and looked at the writing.

The document was hot enough to make its handling almost unpleasant, but Jack held on to it and looked intently at the writing which had appeared in such a mysterious way.

Across the center of the outlined island was marked "Little Key, abt. 5 L SW Turks. L abt 20 d 51 m. L abt 71 d 15 m."

Pointing at the cross on the chart was now seen an arrow, with the words, "Treasure here," above and below it.

Across the top of the paper appeared the following: "6 Fm ESE from H T. 20 Fm W by S to Palmetto. Dig 5 F."

At the bottom in one corner was written: "Drawn by John Gilpin."

At the opposite corner: "Take bearings from N side abt midway shore. Bring 5 palmettos in line grove with coffin bearing SE."

"It's a treasure chart, sure enough!" said Jack, in no little excitement. "See that arrowhead and the words 'Treasure here,' pointing at the cross? There's the name of the island, 'Little Key.' It is situated about four L southwest of Turks."

"What does L and Turks mean?" asked Bob, equally excited.

"L means leagues, and Turks is probably the name of a larger island bearing northeast. Little Key is therefore twelve miles from Turks Island."

"What are those letters and figures along the top?"

"The latitude and longitude of the small key. Why, with this writing it's as easy to find as rolling off a log."

"And do you really believe there's buried treasure on that island?" asked Bob.

"I don't know any more about it than what it says, but that seems to indicate that there is, or at least was, at one time. It may have been recovered long ago."

Even as the boys gazed at the paper the writing gradually became dim as the paper cooled.

"Oh, I say, it's fading out. Make a note of it, quick, or you'll lose it altogether."

Jack laughed.

"Don't worry. I'm onto this thing. That's written in a sort of sympathetic ink, only visible when heated. If I were to lay it in the sun again it would all come out as plain as before."

"I never thought of that," said Bob. "It's all gone now, and the paper looks like it did before. Say, that's the greatest ever! I don't wonder that black rascal is anxious to get hold of it. He comes from that part of the world and must know a whole lot about buried treasures on those islands. The man who owned that paper hid it in the mast because maybe he was afraid of being robbed of it by Quassamodo, who knew that he had it. The West Indian must have found out that the man hid it somewhere in the forecastle, and he's been tearing things up generally in that part of the wreck in his eagerness to find it."

"You couldn't have stated it clearer, Bob," said Jack. "You've got the thing down fine."

"Now we've got it, and some day we may find a chance to hunt up the Little Key, and search for the treasure."

"That's right. Who would have thought that we should make such a remarkable discovery aboard that old wreck?"

"We wouldn't have made it if you hadn't taken the notion to shy the hatchet at that mast. You not only won my quarter, but a mighty important secret as well."

The boys looked oceanward, but they couldn't see even a cat's-paw of wind.

"Looks hazy along the horizon," said Jack. "We'll probably have a slant after a time."

After a glance at the wreck they crawled under the shelter of the sail again.

The warmth of the afternoon soon made them drowsy, and, after talking a little while, they nodded off to sleep.

And while they slept the distant haze drew thicker and nearer, and finally resolved itself into a dense fog that crept upon the shoal like a thief in the night.

A slight breeze preceded and accompanied it, wrinkling the surface of the ocean into a myriad of sun-kissed dimples, till the sea looked as if an immense school of silver fishes had suddenly come to the surface, protruding their bright fins everywhere.

Gradually the advancing fog blotted out the dancing wavelets, and even the sky itself, obscuring the sun's jolly, round face.

All unconscious of the presence of this insidious enemy, the boys slept on till the fog reached the shoal and swallowed up the wreck and the distant lowland neck, whose mammoth head was Clifton village.

The mist kept on its way, noiselessly and steadily.

It was as if a great, gray sponge was passing over the face of nature, wiping out all the surrounding objects.

The water sluggishly rose and fell about the catboat as the receding tide pulled on its mooring line.

There was now no sign of land anywhere, only that gray, dismal curtain that had fallen on every side.

Finally a big log, which had floated out from Boston harbor, struck the Sunbeam a heavy blow on her bows.

The shock not only awoke the boys, but it caused the boat to pull its anchor off bottom, and she drifted out into deep water, carrying it with her.

CHAPTER V.

LOST IN THE FOG.

"Suffering sixpence! What's this?" cried Bob, as he stuck his head from under the sail. "Where the dickens have we got to?"

Jack stuck his head out the other side and saw that they were surrounded by a thick fog.

"I guess we're in the same place we were when we went to sleep, only a fog has come up and captured us."

"It isn't a nice thing to be caught in a fog on North Shoal," said Bob.

"That's so, but I don't see how we can help ourselves."

"What are we going to do? Stay here till the fog lifts? It may last clear into night, and perhaps till to-morrow morning."

"It's likely to, that's a fact."

"You take it mighty easy."

"What's the use of kicking?"

"It's a satisfaction sometimes. I feel like doing it mighty hard at the present moment," grumbled Bob.

"If we could kick ourselves over to Clifton there might be some sense in it, but we can't. We have one satisfaction, at any rate."

"What's that?"

"As long as we're anchored to the shoal we can't lose our way, and we're not in much danger of being run down by a passing vessel."

Unfortunately, the catboat was not anchored to the shoal, but was rapidly drifting out into the trackless Atlantic.

The motion, however, was so imperceptible to the boys that they were not aware of their true position.

"What time is it, Bob?" asked Jack, after a short silence.

Bob consulted his silver watch and announced that it was after four o'clock.

"We have three hours of daylight before us," said Jack. "Perhaps the fog will lift before that."

"I hope so," replied Bob. "I don't want to stay here all night."

"Well, we might as well take it easy, seeing as we can't do anything."

So the boys took possession of the seat around the cockpit and Bob told his companion how he expected to pass his time during the vacation weeks.

"You're a lucky boy to be able to have a vacation," said Jack, a bit enviously. "You must come down and see me at the boat-shop once in a while."

"Sure I will, and I'll give you a lift occasionally just to amuse myself."

"All right, I'll be glad to have you come around. I guess Mr. Peaseley won't object."

"Of course he won't. I'm solid with him."

And so they talked while the fog, instead of lifting, seemed to get more opaque.

"It's five o'clock and the mist is thicker than ever," said Bob, after lighting a match to look at his timepiece. "Let's get in under cover. I've swallowed all the fog I want to. I'd rather swallow something more solid, for I'm getting plaguey hungry."

"Same here," replied Jack. "I think we left a couple of sandwiches when we were eating dinner. They'll taste good now."

So they retired to the cabin, found the sandwiches and ate them with great relish.

"Too bad we didn't fetch a whole pie along, then we'd have a slice apiece left," said Bob, smacking his lips, for he had a weakness for pie at all times.

There were two small lockers in the little cabin, one on either side, and the boys took possession of them and stretched out.

The Sunbeam was by this time more than a mile to the eastward of the shoal, though the lads thought she was still at anchor.

Had they known they were afloat, and in the track of vessels making for Boston harbor, they would have been not a little alarmed.

Another hour wore away and they were still in the grasp of the fog.

"I'm afraid we're stuck for the night," said Bob. "The fog is still as thick as pea soup."

"I'm afraid so, too, for it will be dark in another hour. However, there's no use crying over spilled milk."

It was dark in less than an hour, for the mist added to the general obscurity.

Shortly after the boys grew weary of talking and fell asleep.

And while they slept in fancied security an ocean-going steamer that plied between New York City and Portland, Maine, swept by them at half speed, narrowly missing running them down.

The swell jerked the little craft violently up and down and awoke them.

"Hello! What's that?" asked Bob. "Must be a sea on, but I don't hear the wind."

They sprang to their feet and rushed out into the cockpit.

There was only a light wind blowing that seemed to make little impression on the mist, but the Sunbeam was still rocking unpleasantly.

The hoarse whistle of the steamship was to be heard dying away southward.

"This dern boat feels as if she was afloat," said Bob.

"Can't be. We didn't pull in the anchor," replied Jack.

"I know we didn't, but somehow or another she doesn't feel as if she's tied to anything."

"I hope she hasn't broken away," he said, "for it would be impossible to say where we might drift to. I'll go forward and make sure. I see the water has grown calmer again. Maybe that was the swell of some big steamer passing near the shoal."

When Jack crawled over the roof of the cabin to the bows of the catboat he found the mooring-line hanging straight downward.

It didn't take him more than a minute to discover that the anchor was not holding the boat.

"My gracious! We are adrift for a fact! What is to be done? If we hoist the sail we cannot tell in what direction to steer for the land," said Jack to himself.

Then he called Bob forward and told him of their predicament.

"Help me get the anchor aboard," he concluded.

They soon had the anchor out of the water and secured on the deck.

"I suppose we'll drift about now till the fog lifts," said Bob.

"Your supposition is a correct one," replied his companion.

"Don't you think we'd better hoist the sail," said Bob.

"No, for I've no idea in what direction the shore is."

"We may get run down in this fog."

"We've got to chance it. At any rate we'd better keep out of the cabin until the weather clears."

There was a lantern in the cabin.

Jack lit it, climbed to the top of the mast and tied it up there.

Its light made but little impression on the fog.

"How long do you suppose we've been adrift?" asked Bob. "I haven't the remotest idea."

"And you can't tell whether we're drifting in toward Boston or out to sea."

"I cannot."

"This is a nice kettle of fish," growled Bob. "Supposing we're floating to the eastward we're likely to find ourselves out of sight of the coast when the fog disperses."

Jack made no reply.

He didn't relish the state of things at all.

Night was now full upon them, and the fog continued as thick as ever.

CHAPTER VI.

A STRANGE CRAFT.

Although it was decidedly damp and unpleasant sitting out in the cockpit in the mist, the boys did not dare return to the shelter of the cabin, lest the catboat be run down in the obscurity and they be caught almost like rats in a trap.

The hours passed away drearily enough to them, and it seemed as if the night never would end, although the sun was due to rise in about twenty minutes after four.

"This is the worst I've ever been up against," said Bob, as he flapped his arms vigorously about to try and shake off the chill that penetrated to his very bones. "My father and mother will be worried to death about me."

"They'll learn from Mr. Peaseley that you and I went off together yesterday morning in his catboat to visit North Shoal, and they'll no doubt understand that we were caught by the fog."

"That won't give them much satisfaction, for they won't know whether we're tied up at the wreck or have floated out to sea. Why, we don't even know ourselves where we are! We may be close in to Boston at this moment, or we may be out of sight of the coast altogether."

"That's correct. These fogs are holy terrors to get mixed up in."

"Suppose when morning comes and we get out of the fog we find ourselves at sea, what are we going to do?"

"Don't look on the worst side, Bob."

"I can't help it. We haven't a thing aboard to eat, and I'm almost starved."

"We've got fish."

"Excuse me, I don't fancy raw fish as an article of diet."

"We can cook them."

"How?"

"There's a coal-oil stove in the cabin, and there's pans, dishes and other fixings in one of the lockers. As long as the weather remains as calm as it is we can use the stove on top of the cabin. Mr. Peaseley has often used it that way, he told me when he went on a short cruise up or down the coast."

"You make my mouth water, Jack," said Bob, as he thought of fried mackerel for breakfast. "I wish morning would come so we could see where we are and get something to eat."

The fog will have to lift before we can get our bearings, even when morning comes."

At that moment the Sunbeam floated right out of the mist, bank and they beheld the sky above and down to the very horizon, ahead and on either side, bright with stars.

Behind them they could see nothing but obscurity.

"Hurrah!" shouted Bob. "We're out of it at last."

That fact afforded the boys great satisfaction.

Bob struck a match and consulted his watch.

"Four o'clock," he said. "It will soon be daylight, and we'll be able to tell where we are."

"It looks to me as if we're drifting away from the shore," said Jack. "As far as I can see there isn't a sign of land."

"Well, it won't take us long to sail back. I'll bet we aren't such a great way from the shoal."

"I wonder what that is yonder?" said Jack, pointing out a dark smudge on the water. "Must be a vessel."

"Let's hoist our sail and run down to her," suggested Bob. "She's probably bound in for Boston."

"It's a wonder she hasn't a light somewhere about her," said Jack. "Vessels, as a rule, carry lights at night to prevent a collision at sea."

They hoisted the sail and bore down toward her.

The wind being very light, they did not make very rapid progress.

Soon the eastern sky began to show signs of coming day.

With the rising of the sun the breeze freshened and the whole surface of the ocean, now spread out before the boys, was ruffled with small whitecaps.

Although they had no compass aboard, the sun gave them a general idea of their bearings.

They knew the coast lay to the west, though they couldn't see it.

The mist still clung close to the water in that direction, and they believed when it lifted the shores of Massachusetts would be seen not such a great way off.

Their attention now was almost wholly occupied with the vessel in the near distance.

She was about a mile distant and Jack made her out to be a brigantine.

She was slowly sailing westward with yards square, under her upper and lower topsails, foresail, jib and foretopmast staysail.

There was one thing about her that greatly puzzled Jack, who had a nautical eye.

The vessel did not seem to be under any control.

She would come up into the wind one moment and fall off again the next, just as if the helmsman was asleep at his post and the craft was sailing herself.

"I never saw a vessel act that way before," said Jack, after calling his companion's attention to the erratic movements of the brigantine. "Looks to me as if there was no one at the wheel."

Although Bob was no sailor, he could not but see that the vessel was acting in a very queer way.

"May be the steersman is asleep," he said.

"That isn't likely, for the officer of the watch would soon bring him to his senses. That craft has been sailing in that fashion ever since we got a clear view of her."

"Maybe there's something wrong on board of her."

"That's what I've been thinking, though I can't imagine what it could be."

"She's a dirty-looking vessel. I don't see any flag that would show her nationality," said Bob.

"She's a foreigner, all right."

"How can you tell?"

"By her general appearance. Might be a Portuguese from Lisbon, or an Italian from Genoa, Leghorn or Naples. It is evident she's making for Boston."

"We'll follow her in and then we can't go astray."

The catboat rapidly overhauled the square-rigged vessel under the peculiar circumstances of the case.

The two boys, in their eagerness to close with her, had quite forgotten how hungry they were.

The closer they drew to the brigantine the more singular her actions appeared to them.

Not a sign of a human being appeared on the poop deck or forecastle.

That's the funniest thing I ever heard of. There's no one at her wheel. That accounts for her coming up and falling off. But why should she be abandoned when there doesn't seem to be anything the matter with her?"

That's the way Jack argued, evidently much mystified by the situation.

Bob, of course, couldn't offer any solution of the seeming mystery, and so he held his tongue.

Suddenly Jack noticed that the vessel's boats on the side they were approaching were not only not suspended high up on the davits inboard, but that the davits were swung outward, and the lowering tackle was swinging about close to the water.

"By George!" he cried. "I believe she has been abandoned."

"What makes you think so?" asked Bob.

"Don't you see her boats are gone and the tackle is hanging loose?"

"Yes, I do. That's funny, isn't it?"

"It's something more than funny to me," said Jack. "It's decidedly curious. The idea of abandoning an apparently stanch vessel under all plain sail gets me."

"Maybe there's been a mutiny on board, and the crew took to the boats?" suggested Bob.

"What about the officers?"

"The sailors might have killed them. I've read about such things in books."

"Whatever the reason for leaving her they got away in such a hurry that they didn't take the trouble to lash the wheel in order to keep the craft before the wind."

"Then you believe she is deserted?"

"She looks to be. It will be great luck for us if she is."

"How do you make that out?"

"We can take possession of her, work her into Boston harbor, which isn't a great way off, and claim salvage money."

"Would we get much?"

"We'd make a good thing out of her even if the cargo isn't particularly valuable. But supposing she was loaded

with fine wines, or Italian marble, or something of that sort, we'd do still better. There's no danger of our getting swindled, for we have the law on our side."

"Gee! I hope she's been abandoned, then. I'd like to make a few hundred dollars just about this time," said Bob, eagerly.

They were now within a few hundred yards of the brigantine.

There wasn't the slightest evidence that any one was aboard of her.

The boys could see the wheel turn this way and that as the rudder swung aimlessly from side to side when the vessel came up in the wind or fell off.

Jack steered straight for the tackle hanging from the after davit.

"Go forward, Bob, and catch onto that tackle. Make it fast to our painter. Then I'll shin up and see what I can see aboard."

Bob obeyed, and in a few minutes they were fast alongside the brigantine.

CHAPTER VII.

THE MYSTERY AND ITS EXPLANATION.

Jack pulled himself up the tackle, reached the davit and straddling it, slid down to the bulwark, where he stood looking around the deck.

"What do you see?" asked Bob, from the top of the catboat's cabin.

"The main hatch is open," replied Jack, "but nothing else out of the common. Come up the way I did."

"We'll take a look in the cabin," said Jack. "Come on."

The door of the passage connecting with the cabin stood wide open and the boys entered, Bob rather fearlessly, as he half expected to see some terrible sight.

The pantry door, opening off the passage, also stood open, and looking in they saw a scene of wild disorder.

Stores of various kinds were scattered about the floor and upset on the shelves.

A case of cognac was literally torn to pieces, half a dozen of the bottles lying about at haphazard and one of them broken.

"Looks as if there had been a free fight in this place," said Bob. "I'll bet there has been a mutiny on board this vessel."

Jack said nothing, but was willing to admit that the appearance of things was not reassuring.

After they had satisfied their curiosity with the pantry they went on to the cabin.

Here the boys were fairly paralyzed by the look of things.

The chairs had been torn from their fastenings and lay all about in twisted and broken wrecks of their former shape.

The table was littered with splintered glass fragments of the decanter and glasses which had once swung in a tray beneath the skylight.

The floor was covered with bedding, wearing apparel, and a hundred odds and ends that had evidently come from the staterooms on either side.

The captain's room abaft was a total wreck.

"My gracious!" ejaculated Bob. "A crazy man at his worst could hardly do so much damage. What the dickens does it all mean?"

"I give it up," replied Jack, scratching his head. "One would think some wild animal had been tearing around in here."

"That's right. The damage done beats all creation."

They looked carefully about for some solution of the mystery, but could find nothing that would let in any light on it.

"Maybe the officers and crew got blind drunk and pulled things about," hazarded Bob. "There are four empty brandy bottles on the floor which, taken in connection with the smashed case of spirits, might explain matters."

"It is possible, but hardly probable," replied Jack. "Let's go forward and see how things look in the fo'k'sle."

The boys left the cabin and proceeded toward the bows.

They mounted the rour steps to the forecastle deck and approached the opening leading down into the sailors' quarters.

They were within a yard of it when out of the hole slowly rose the head of an enormous ape.

Its two great front paws followed, catching hold of the side of the opening, and there it remained, its frightful looking head lolling from side to side as if it had no control over its neck, and its half-closed eyes gazing stupidly at the boys.

Bob uttered a yell of terror when he caught sight of the

hideous object, started back, tripped himself up and rolled off the forecastle onto the main deck, where he lay stunned from the shock.

Jack stood glued to the spot and stared in amazement at the terrible apparition.

"My gracious!" he breathed. "What kind of monkey is this? He looks like the grandfather of the whole race. He's a holy terror. Where has Bob got to?"

Bob wasn't to be seen, so Jack backed away to the edge of the forecastle, intending to jump down on the main deck.

Then it was that he saw his companion lying in a heap quite still below him.

He sprang down, seized Bob in his arms and dragged him over to the cabin.

Going into the pantry he picked up the broken brandy bottle, which still held about a third of its contents, poured some of the liquor into a cup, and, returning to his friend, opened his mouth and let some of the spirits trickle down his throat.

Bob was coming to, anyway, but the brandy hastened his revival.

He opened his eyes, sat up and looked around.

"What happened to me?" he asked.

"The monkey you saw at the fo'k'sle scuttle scared you so much that you took a tumble."

"Where did I tumble to?"

"Onto the deck, and the shock knocked you out."

"Oh, my, do you call that thing a monkey? Why, it was as big as a giant. It must be a gorilla. Where is it now? And what is it doing aboard this vessel?"

"It's over still with its head out of the scuttle opening. I couldn't tell you how it got aboard this brigantine. Probably it escaped from its cage after the vessel was abandoned."

"I'll bet a dollar that's the thing that turned the cabin inside out. No ordinary monkey could do that. It must be a gorilla. Those chaps are as strong as a team of oxen. I've read about them. They can take an ordinary iron bar and twist it like you or I might a thin lead pipe, into any old shape. What we want to do is to get out of the vessel as soon as we can. You don't catch me staying here with such a beast as that for company. Not on your life! If that thing came after us we couldn't get away from him to save our lives. What's he doing over there now?"

"Nothing that I can see."

"Then let us make a sneak for our boat before he takes a notion in his head to get better acquainted with us."

"And give up the salvage we will be entitled to for bringing this brigantine into Boston?"

"We would never be able to sail the vessel in with that beast at liberty on board. He'd make mincemeat of us in no time."

At that moment the huge ape slowly and with great difficulty worked its way out of the forecastle.

Then it began to stagger around the roof of the forecastle in a drunken way.

Finally it rolled off onto the deck something like Bob did.

Picking itself up it came toward the cabin, rolling from side to side, its great legs almost giving way under it.

Bob made a dash for the davit by which they had gained the deck of the vessel.

His intention was to regain the catboat in the shortest possible space of time.

Climbing the bulwark, he was about to pull himself out to the tackle when he made a terrible discovery.

The Sunbeam was gone.

With a gasp of dismay he looked out on the water and saw it sailing away by itself a quarter of a mile off.

The boat is gone," he screamed back at Jack, who had followed him with the intention of trying to persuade him to remain on board, for to his eyes the huge monkey seemed to be in a condition incapable of doing much more mischief.

"Gone!" yelled Jack. "What do you mean?"

"She's broken loose and is sailing away yonder."

"That'll be the end of her, then. Why didn't you tie her securely?"

"I thought I did. Oh, my, that gorilla will do us up now!"

By this time the ape had reached the main hatch.

Bob was regarding its approach with the greatest alarm, while Jack was figuring on getting out of its way.

At that moment a change came in the wind.

A strong flaw struck the brigantine's sails, which, being braced in the wrong direction to meet it, caused the craft to lurch to port.

The ape lost what little balance it had and pitched head first down the open hatchway.

Jack rushed over to the hatch and looked down.

The animal lay stretched out at full length, feebly working its arms and legs, and rolling its head.

Now was the chance to secure it below, and Jack shouted to Bob to come over.

He seemed loath to venture.

"Come here, will you, and help me put the hatch on. Then he won't be able to bother us."

Bob now understood the situation, and he lost no time in helping Jack make a prisoner of the dangerous animal.

"What a blessing the beast tumbled in there," said Bob, as soon as the cover was on the hatch. "Only for that he wouldn't have done a thing to us. You acted as if you don't understand what fierce rascals those gorillas are."

"That isn't a gorilla."

"It isn't?"

"No."

"What is it, then?" asked Bob, scornfully. "Don't you suppose I know what a gorilla is?"

"I admit it is next door to one. That is a huge ape, and they're ugly things to tackle when they're mad. This one, however, is almost harmless now."

"How do you make that out?"

"Because any fool could see with half an eye that he is stupidly drunk. He's been filling himself up with brandy. He probably drank the contents of those four cognac bottles we saw in the cabin, and the first effect of it was to send him on a rampage about the place. I'll bet the secret of all this mystery is that he was being brought to America in a cage in the 'tween decks of this vessel. He broke out of the cage and came on deck through the hatch which was, no doubt, left open in fair weather to give him plenty of air. I can imagine that he was in a bad humor over his confinement below, and that he raised Cain fore and aft. The sailors were frightened into taking to the boats, and the officers joined them when they saw that it was impossible to kill him except at a tremendous risk. The brute, finding himself alone, rummaged about for something to eat, and in the course of his foraging smashed open that case of French brandy, breaking one of the bottles. Getting a taste of the stuff, he wanted more, and carried the four bottles into the cabin, where he knocked their necks off and drank the liquor. As soon as it got into his head he wrecked the cabin and stateroom and then betook himself to the fo'k'sle. That's my idea how the brigantine came to be abandoned, for I don't see any other way to account for it."

As a matter of fact, as the story afterward came out in the papers, Jack hit the exact solution, only it had a tragic side he did not dream of.

The captain of the vessel had tried to kill the ape with his revolver.

After putting two balls into the beast's body the ape caught him, broke his neck, twisted his body like a corkscrew and threw it overboard.

The ease with which the brute disposed of the skipper caused a panic among the other officers and crew, and they hastily lowered the boats and left the vessel.

They intended to return after a time, when they thought the animal might be asleep, but lost the brigantine in the fog.

They were picked up next day and carried in to Boston, but by that time their vessel, with Jack and Bob aboard, was a considerable distance south of Cape Cod.

CHAPTER VIII.

THE GALE.

Jack and Bob soon found that they had something else to think about than the ape under the hatches.

A sudden change had come over the weather while they were aboard the brigantine.

A heavy bank of clouds had mounted the sky, a thick haze was now creeping over the surface of the ocean, and there were other indications of a coming gale.

Jack, after the ape had been satisfactorily disposed of, for the time being at least, perceived the unfavorable change in the atmospheric conditions, and with an eye to the safety of himself and his companions, as well as the vessel, bestirred himself to meet it.

While an excellent boatman in his way, he was not much of a sailor of a 300-ton square-rigger like the brigantine.

But he understood the theory of handling such a craft

after a fashion, and this knowledge was something at all events in the present emergency.

"Since our own boat is lost to us," he said to Bob, "we'll have to do the best we can with this craft, and try to work her in Boston. But I'm bound to say that from the looks of the weather I think our work is cut out for us."

"I don't see anything the matter with the weather, except that it's got cloudy and looks as if we might have rain before long," replied Bob, to whom the signs that were intelligible to Jack were as a closed book.

"We'll have more than rain before long," said Jack, nodding his head confidently.

"You mean we'll have more wind, I suppose."

"You can bet we will, and lots of it. We'll have to reduce the canvas or we may go to the bottom with our prize."

"You don't mean that, do you?" asked Bob, nervously.

"I do mean it, most emphatically. We must turn to at once and strip her."

"Get all those sails in?" said Bob, casting his eyes aloft.

"Exactly. Except the foretopmast stays'l. We'll leave that."

"How are we going to furl them? We aren't sailors, and there's only two of us at that."

"We can't furl them in ship-shape style, but if the weather holds as it is now I guess I can manage to clew them up after a fashion. I'm going to bring the old hooker up into the wind now and lash the wheel, so she'll hold steady."

Jack cut off enough line from a coil hanging from a belaying pin at one of the masts to answer his purpose, and he soon had the brigantine under control.

While he was attending to this task Bob sneaked into the pantry and proceeded to satisfy his hunger with such stuff as he could lay his hands on quickly, such as canned tongue and crackers, washed down with water from a pitcher that had escaped the ape's attention.

Then Jack came looking for him.

"What are you doing now?" he asked.

"Eating," grinned Bob, stuffing half of a tongue into his mouth. "Better have some before you get down to business. You'll work better."

The sight of Bob working his jaws brought all his own hungry sensations to the surface, and Jack couldn't resist the temptation to imitate his companion's example.

He finished a partly filled can of potted meat out of the wreck, and with a handful of crackers at his elbow, he began to satisfy the cravings of his appetite.

It didn't take him long to finish the contents of the can and put away a dozen crackers, then filling his pockets with more crackers, he rushed out on deck, followed by Bob, who was eager to be of assistance in any way his services might prove available.

The two boys set about the task which at first sight appeared to be impossible for them to accomplish, considering their inexperience.

Jack's slight knowledge of seamanship was sufficient to show him how the work should be performed, and with the winch as a very material aid, the huge squares of canvas were clewed up after rather a clumsy fashion.

The wind came on in intermittent puffs while they were thus employed, and then died away to a dead calm.

The boys took advantage of the respite to make a second breakfast in the pantry.

While they were at it the gale swooped down on them all of a sudden.

The brigantine went over on her beams' ends and Jack and Bob landed on top of each other in a corner.

The vessel partly recovered from the shock and then dashed through the smother like a frightened bird skimming the waves.

Jack hastened to the wheel, unlashed it and kept the brigantine before the wind.

She was not pointing a course to reach Boston harbor now, for it was impossible for the boy to do other than let the craft have her own way, which was carrying her due south at racehorse speed.

As Bob was of no use he kept under cover in the cabin.

He did Jack one good turn, however—he found the chief mate's sou'-wester and waterproof coat among the debris in the cabin, and brought it up to him, holding the wheel pretty steady while Jack donned them.

This was a fortunate discovery, for the rain soon came pouring down in sheets.

As the moments flew by the gale increased, until it seemed

to the boys as if it could not possibly blow harder, and yet it was far from approaching the intensity of a hurricane.

The brigantine ploughed through the waves at a furious rate, careening well to the leeward.

Her foretopmast staysail had long since been blown clean out of the bolt ropes, and vanished like a puff of white smoke into the gale.

The only canvas she now had spread was her closely-reefed jib.

Morning passed away and merged into afternoon, and still the gale reigned supreme over the face of the sea.

The waves that followed and surrounded the brigantine seemed tall enough to engulf her, but she rose like a cork to them and flew onward like a thing of life.

Jack grew weary of his prolonged spell at the wheel as the hours went by, but he could not leave his post even for a few moments, for the vessel in that case would have broached to and in all likelihood have foundered.

Finally he had to call on Bob to help him hold the wheel steady.

His companion brought him up a good swig of brandy to warm his blood and put new life into him.

They both stuck to the wheel until night fell, dark and stormy, over the face of the broad Atlantic.

They exchanged but few words, as talking could only be carried on under great difficulty.

"Do you think you can hold her steady while I go into the pantry and get a bite to eat?" asked the exhausted Jack, bellowing out the words in Bob's ear.

Bob nodded and Ashmore relinquished the wheel.

He was away fifteen minutes and then returned, feeling a little better.

Oakley then went below and had something to eat himself, after which he returned to Jack's side.

At midnight the gale broke, though it was an hour before Jack noticed any decided change for the better.

By this time the brigantine presented the appearance of a vessel that had gone through a strenuous experience.

Her top hamper was reduced to a shapeless wreck, all her upper spars having been carried away, and her topmasts gone by the board.

Had she had her crew and officers aboard none of these things would have happened, but the half-furled sails had been torn loose in sections, and the strain of the wind upon them had several times threatened the loss of the vessel herself.

Only the fact that the upper masts had given away under the weight of the gale saved her.

Jack sent Bob below to take a rest, and it was long after daybreak before he reappeared, rubbing his eyes.

About half a gale was now blowing, and that was sufficient to compel the boys to keep their wits about them.

Jack felt about half dead, but he did not feel that he could afford to take a rest until the weather became more favorable, for he dared not rely on Bob's inexperience under the present condition of things.

The most he would do was to go below long enough to eat something and brace up on a little more brandy.

His arms were numb and sore from holding on to the jerking wheel, and he rubbed them down with brandy before he returned to the poop.

Finding that Bob was doing pretty well, he sat down at the top of the companion steps leading to the cabin, within a yard of his friend, and watched him.

Here fatigue overcame him and he dropped off asleep.

Bob stuck to his job like a little hero and let Jack sleep until a heavy wave, striking the brigantine under her counter, and almost jerking the spokes out of Bob's hands, awoke him.

The sun was now making valiant efforts to pierce the heavy clouds that obscured the heavens.

"The waves seem worse than ever," said Bob, in rather a dejected tone, as Jack relieved him at the wheel.

"That's because the wind, being no longer so heavy, does not flatten them out," replied his companion.

"When do you think the storm will be over?"

"The gale has practically blown itself out now," replied Jack. "We're getting the tail-end at present. By noon it ought to be down to a fair wind."

"I wish the sun would come out. It would make things look more cheerful."

"It may be out by twelve o'clock, or even before."

"It can't make its appearance any too soon to suit me. I guess I'll go down and get something to eat. I wonder how

that ape is getting on. He must be getting over his jag by this time. We ought to put a weight on the hatch to prevent him from pushing it up and getting out."

"Don't worry about the ape. It will take him some time to get over his drunk. Your idea of putting something heavy on the hatch, however, is a good one. When the rascal comes to he'll be hungry, and then we'll hear him making Rome howl in the 'tween decks. He'll have to starve as far as we're concerned, for we couldn't take the chances of trying to feed him with canned stuff, even if we could find enough of it."

Bob stayed below half an hour and then rejoined Jack.

"I wonder how I ever pulled through last night," said Bob. "I've never been out on the ocean before in any kind of a blow. And I don't know anything more about steering a vessel than a donkey. Why, it almost gives me the cold shivers to look out over the water now and to feel the plunging of the brigantine. It's a wonder I don't feel seasick. The storm must have scared it all out of me."

"You're liable to be sick when it gets calmer."

"How so?" asked Bob, in surprise.

"I don't say you will, but I've known people whose stomachs would stand a good tossing about under certain circumstances, and the next time they went on the water in a light blow they got as sick as a dog."

"I hope that won't happen to me. I should think I could stand most anything after this experience."

"If the wind veers around and kicks up a cross-sea the brigantine will roll your stomach out of you."

"Oh, my! I don't want that to happen," grimaced Bob.

"I have an idea that the wind will hold steady as it is. It is gradually losing its weight, and may drop to just a smacking breeze."

"Where do you imagine we are now?"

"Ask me something easy, Bob. I guess we're far out from the American coast, and well to the south of Boston."

"We'll never get back there with this craft. Look at the condition of her. I don't believe we could sail her back if she was in as good shape as we found her."

"I'm afraid you're right, Bob. We'll have to hoist a distress signal when the weather gets better, and ask to be taken off. That gale put us out of a good thing, but it can't be helped now."

Two hours later things were so much improved that Jack left Bob in charge of the wheel and went below to take a sleep.

CHAPTER IX.

AFTER THE GALE.

Jack enjoyed a four-hour spell of rest, and then came on deck much refreshed.

It was well along toward noon, the blue sky appeared here and there in spots, and the sun frequently showed his jovial face, as if anxious to make amends for the wild pranks lately indulged in by that hoary-headed sinner, Old Boreas.

The wind was blowing a fresh breeze, which was like a mild zephyr as compared with the late gale.

Jack felt he could relieve Bob and lash the wheel with perfect safety.

He immediately did so.

"It's a relief to get away from that derned old wheel," said Bob. "When I get back to school I'll have a whole lot to tell the boys about how I sailed a half-wrecked brigantine through a spanking gale, expecting that every moment would be my last," he said, with a smile. "If we aren't rescued pretty soon I'll become a full-fledged sailor, but your boots! A regular Ben Bolt or Tom Bowling."

"I see you're feeling pretty good, Bob, now that we're comparatively out of danger for the present," chuckled Jack.

"Yes, a fellow feels a whole lot different when the sun is shining and the sea is not trying to come aboard every minute to swamp the vessel. I shouldn't care to be a sailor as a regular business. It's too strenuous at times, like last night and yesterday afternoon, for instance. It is much better to be on shore when the wind gets a jag on. And that reminds me that we haven't taken measures yet to make sure that ape doesn't get out of the hold. We'd better get busy and clap some weights on the hatch."

"Want to take a look at him first?" asked Jack.

"No, sir! I've had all the look I want. I believe he's already scared seven months' growth out of me."

The boys lost no time in weighting the hatch with a small water barrel, which had been lashed against the galley forward.

"I guess that'll keep him down," said Jack. "I've no doubt but we'll hear from him before long. That ape had proved an expensive investment for somebody. If this brigantine is lost I'll consider him responsible for it."

"That won't worry the beast much. I move we light the galley fire and make some coffee. I saw a package of it on the pantry floor."

"All right, old chap. I'll look after the galley while you go and tidy up the pantry. That will give you a chance to find out what kind of supplies we have on hand."

"That job will suit me. I'll bring you the coffee st."

Bob found that there was plenty of supplies in the pantry—enough to last him and Jack for a considerable time if fate compelled them to remain for any lengthy period in the vessel.

Jack lighted the pantry fire, put water on to boil, and in due time turned out a pot of very appetizing coffee.

Their dinner consisted chiefly of a jar apiece of boned chicken, all the crackers they could eat, and a can of preserved peaches.

"That meal was fit for a king," said Bob, after swallowing his second cup of coffee.

"I have no fault to find with it. It's the first decent meal we've had since Saturday."

"There's plenty more of the same stuff in the pantry, so we won't starve, that's one blessing. Just think if we'd been blown out to sea in the catboat, with nothing aboard but those fish we caught, what a fix we'd have been in."

"The chances are if that gale caught us in the Sunbeam we'd have been food ourselves for the fishes long before this," replied Jack.

"Then it was lucky, after all, that we came aboard this vessel."

"Probably so. It depends a good deal on how far we were from the shore yesterday morning when the fog left us."

"We must have been out of sight of it, for I looked for the coast after we got aboard here, and I couldn't see a sign of it."

"Now, Bob, we must search for the flag-locker. Almost any old piece of bunting will do for a signal of distress."

"Where are you going to hang it out? Both the upper masts are gone and are towing alongside attached to the wreck of the rigging."

"I suppose we'll have to nail it to the broken piece of the foretopmast that is standing. We'll also have to find an axe and chop away the rigging holding the wreck alongside. It's mighty fortunate that we pulled through with that stuff hanging to us. I don't see how we ever did it. There must be a special Providence looking out for us two."

"Maybe it's the little cherub that I've heard sits up aloft to keep watch over the life of the sailor," grinned Bob.

"If that cherub was sitting up aloft last night he got a cold bath when the topmasts went over into the sea," replied Jack. "Come, now, we'll go into the cabin and hunt for the bunting."

While they were searching for the flag-locker Bob wanted to know how soon Jack thought some vessel or steamer would come in sight and take them off.

"At any moment," replied Ashmore. "Maybe by the time we get on deck again there'll be something in sight. Even without a signal this craft looks so dismantled that she's bound to attract attention on any passing vessel within telescope range. The captain of any vessel, unless he's a hog, would come close enough to send a boat to inquire if we wanted assistance."

But, even as he spoke so encouragingly, Jack knew it would not be strange if a week, or even more, elapsed before anything larger than a seabird's wing came within their range of vision.

The flag-locker was finally found and a good-sized English ensign was selected as the most available piece of bunting to answer their purpose.

Jack found the carpenter's chest in a small room fitted with a bunk off the passage opposite the pantry.

He got out an axe and a hammer and some nails.

"While I'm up aloft, Bob," he said, "you take the axe and cut away the rigging that is holding the wreckage alongside. Then the old hooker will ride more buoyantly, and on a tolerably even keel."

Bob took the axe and proceeded to carry out his instructions, while Jack started up the ratlines to the foretop, which he reached by way of the futtock shrouds.

To the splintered wreck of the foretopmast he nailed the British ensign, Union Jack down, thus converting the flag into a signal of distress.

Then he returned to the deck and helped Bob finish his work of relieving the brig of her impediments.

As soon as the last piece of rigging was severed, and the wreckage floated off astern, the vessel righted herself a good bit.

"That makes a whole lot of difference, doesn't it?" said Bob.

"Sure, it does. Makes the deck easier to walk on. I'm going below to see if I can find the captain's glass. Better come with me."

The boys partially cleared up the cabin, throwing the broken glass and demoralized chairs overboard.

The captain's telescope was found suspended by a couple of strands in his room.

Jack carried it on deck and swept the ocean as far as he could see with it, but there was not a sail in sight.

"Nothing doing," he said, handing the glass to Bob. "I'm going to leave you in charge of the deck, while I take another snooze. If the wind changes, call me at once."

Bob soon found his lonesome watch very irksome.

There was nothing to look at but the deck, the stunted masts, and the heaving, dark blue sea on every side.

The clouds had almost dispersed by this time, and the sun was shining down with warmth enough to make a shady spot desirable.

There wasn't any shady spot on deck, however, so Bob had to seek the cabin passage when he wanted to cool off.

Jack slept until the sun was dipping below the horizon.

"As I didn't hear from you, I suppose nothing has turned up," he said to Bob as he came on deck.

"Not a thing. The afternoon passed dead slow with nobody to talk to," replied Bob, glad to see his partner in misfortune again.

"I suppose you're feeling hungry once more. I'll get a fire started and we'll have supper. You can lay out some canned stuff on the cabin table, and I'll bring the coffee-pot in when it's ready."

Before going to supper Jack climbed up to the maintop and swept the rapidly-darkening sea with the telescope.

There was nothing like a vessel in sight in any quarter of the compass.

Bob had found a kerosene lamp in the pantry, and he lighted it and carried it into the cabin, where it gave out a cheerful glow as soon as twilight faded into the darkness of night.

With the setting of the sun the wind had gradually died down into a gentle breeze, and as there wasn't any canvas at all spread on the brigantine, she was now making scarcely any headway, simply drifting along with the ocean current.

"I noticed the brig's lanterns, all filled and ready for lighting, in the galley," said Jack, as he commenced to eat some potted tongue and crackers. "After supper I'll lash a couple to the stump of the foretopmast and a couple to the stump of the maintopmast. That will give a warning of our presence to any vessel approaching us during the night, and saving us from being run down."

"That's first-class," said Bob. "It's going to be a fine night, with little wind. We don't need to stand any watch, do we? We can bring some bedding out on deck and go to sleep there. The cabin is kind of stuffy, anyway."

"I was going to suggest that myself," said Jack. "We'll do it. It won't be necessary for either of us to stand watch on such a night as this promises to be. If the wind should spring up from a fresh quarter the rolling of the brigantine will awaken me and all I'll have to do will be to put her head up to it, lash the wheel again and turn in, leaving the craft to look after herself."

"There's some advantage, after all, in having no sails to attend to," said Bob.

"But it doesn't offset the disadvantage of being helpless and at the mercy of the wind and sea. To-morrow morning we'll spread the big mainsail and foresail, the only cloths we have left, and head the brig due west. Maybe we'll be able to make some port along the American coast north of Florida."

As soon as the meal was finished Jack went to the galley, lighted the four lanterns and suspended them in the fore and maintops.

Then he helped Bob get a couple of mattresses on deck.

The night was brilliant with stars, and so warm that they did not need any covering over them, so they turned in just as they were, and ere long both were sound asleep, Jack

dreaming that he was at work in Mr. Peaseley's boatbuilding shop, and Bob that he was in his home at Clifton, talking to his father and mother.

CHAPTER X.

SPRUNG A LEAK.

Nothing happened during the night to disturb the boys. They slept like tops and were awakened by the sun shining in their faces.

Bob found by his watch that it was nearly seven o'clock.

The first thing Jack and Bob did was to look for a sail.

They looked in vain—nothing met their eyes but the vast expanse of sparkling water, heaving in long, low, undulating swells.

Then Jack seized the telescope and proceeded to the maintop, from which point of vantage he took in the entire horizon.

Nothing but sky and water filled the focus wherever he looked, so he descended and proceeded to the galley to cook a pot of coffee for breakfast.

After breakfast the mainsail and foresail were set and then Jack unashed the tiller and stood an hour's trick at the wheel, after which he put Bob on the job and mounted once more to the maintop with the telescope.

This time he described a sail a long way off.

She seemed to be heading toward them.

In half an hour he found she was heading across the brigantine's course, and was likely to pass near them.

He ran down and told the news to Bob.

Oakley was overjoyed to learn that a sail was approaching them, for he was anxious to leave the half-wrecked vessel and reach land as soon as possible.

He had no interest whatever in trying to save the brigantine and her cargo under such adverse circumstances.

That idea had taken his fancy when they first came aboard with Boston Harbor within easy reaching distance, but things were quite different now.

Even Jack himself had given up hope of being able to make anything out of the vessel now.

When Bob's hour was up Jack relieved him and he spent his time looking for the distant sail, which was not yet visible from the deck.

Half an hour passed before Bob caught sight of her, and then he watched her grow larger and larger in the field of the glass until Jack called him to take his next spell at the wheel.

The vessel could be seen like a distant white speck by the naked eye.

In the glass she loomed up quite plain.

She was heading almost direct for the brigantine.

There was little doubt but she would come close enough to see the condition of the vessel and her flag of distress.

"I suppose you have no objection to being taken off, have you?" said Jack.

"Me? I should say not! I'm ready to leave this minute if a boat was alongside waiting for us to jump in."

"I fancy a boat will be coming to us before twelve o'clock, or soon after. We've probably eaten our last meal aboard this craft."

The wind was now a bit heavier than when they first shook their two sails to the breeze, and the vessel was making some headway through the water.

It struck Jack that she wasn't moving as fast as she ought to, and that she rolled to the swell with a sluggish motion, like a tired cart-house.

"She must be a slow sailer under the best of circumstances," he thought, though it was true that she had appeared to fly like a racehorse before the late gale.

Looking over the bulwark into the water he noticed that the tackle attached to the davits, which had swung some two feet above the water when they boarded the craft, now barely cleared the surface when she rolled in the opposite direction and were submerged by more than a yard when she rolled back.

While he was wondering at this and thinking how much nearer the bulwark seemed to the water than formerly, a horrible suspicion suddenly took form in his mind.

Had the brigantine sprung a leak during the gale?

Maybe the thumping of the top-hamper alongside for so many hours before they cut it loose had brought about a leak.

The presence of a good bit of water in the hold would account for the sluggish motion of the vessel.

The thought that she might be taking water in rapidly, with the possibility of her sinking before help could reach them, greatly alarmed him.

"I won't say a word about it to Bob, for it would scare him out of his seven senses. I'll see if I can find the apparatus for sounding the well. That will tell me how much water there is in the hold."

He found it in its proper place, and soon ascertained that there was nearly five feet of water below.

"I'll test it again in fifteen minutes and see how fast the leak is gaining," he said to himself, rather nervously.

He took the glass and ran up to the maintop to see how far off the oncoming vessel was, and whether she still held to the same course.

He now made her out to be a large-sized schooner, with every stitch of canvas set to the breeze.

She carried a bone in her teeth, as the nautical expression is, which means that her sharp cutwater was making the spray fly at a rate that showed she was coming down hand over hand.

There was little doubt but that she would pass quite close to the brigantine, and that her people couldn't fail to make out their distress signal.

"She can't come on any too quick now for the safety of Bob and myself. I don't believe this craft will float many hours more. If it wasn't for the appearance of this schooner we'd have to start right in and build a raft to go off on. I never once thought about the possibility of this old hooker springing a leak. I recollect now that it is the custom aboard ship to try the well after a heavy gale to ascertain whether the vessel is tight as usual or has sprung a plank somewhere in her bottom."

Jack was now all nervous excitement, and he watched the approaching schooner continually, fearful that she might alter her course to their disadvantage.

But she didn't, and Jack returned to the deck to test the well again.

This time the gauge showed there was five feet three inches of water in the hold.

"She's making water fast. Thank goodness, that schooner is coming down on us pretty fast. We haven't too much time in which to get away as matters look."

He returned to the poop deck and relieved Bob.

In half an hour the schooner was close aboard.

"Take the wheel, Bob. I'm going to get another flag and signal her from the foretop to make sure that she learns of our desperate predicament," said Jack.

He rushed into the cabin, pulled out an American flag this time from the flag-locker, scurried up to the foretop now and flaunted the ensign to the breeze, stars downward.

"She's still coming straight for us, and they can see our signals with the naked eye by this time," he said to himself. "There oughtn't to be much doubt about our rescue."

And there wasn't, for inside of twenty minutes the schooner was hove to less than a quarter of a mile away, and a boat was rowing over the waves toward the sinking brigantine.

"It's lucky for us, Bob, that this vessel came up as soon as she did," said Jack, as they both stood at the bulwarks waiting for the boat, "for we're in a worse pickle than you supposed."

"How are we?" asked Bob, looking at him in surprise.

"Why, there's six feet of water in the hold by this time. The brig sprang a leak during the gale and she is sinking fast."

"No," cried Bob, aghast, "you don't mean it!"

"I do, for I've sounded the well twice, and I found that she is making water at the rate of over a foot an hour. It won't be many hours before she does down."

"Oh, my! And I never dreamed of such a thing. How long have you known that?"

"Only within the hour. I noticed the lazy way the brig was rolling, and the lack of buoyancy she showed. It didn't look natural to me, especially as she ought to sit lighter on the water after the loss of so much tophamper. So I investigated the well with the result I have just mentioned."

"Well, here comes the boat alongside. We'll be off without loss of time."

The boat came up, one of the two seamen in her caught hold of the tackle hanging from one of the davits, and a red-faced Irishman in the stern sheets shouted to the boys:

"Where's your skipper? Is your brig sinkin', and do yez want to be taken off?"

"There's no one aboard but us two," replied Jack. "The vessel is sinking fast, and we want to get away."

"What's that? No wan aboard but yez two!" returned the Irishman, in a tone of surprise. "Where's the officers and crew?"

"They left the vessel two days or more ago. We——" He was interrupted by a noise behind.

The boys turned around and looked in the direction of the sound.

The main hatch had been lifted enough from underneath to upset the water barrel on it, and now it was being hoisted up still further by a pair of long, hairy arms.

"The ape!" cried Bob, suddenly stricken with terror. "He's getting out of the hold. Oh, my! Let me get away."

Bob sprang onto the bulwark, scrambled out on the davit and slid down the tackle, landing in a heap in the bottom of the boat.

As Jack was following the hatch was thrown over, landing bottom-upward on the deck, and the ape, in a ferocious humor, sprang up the last few steps of the ladder and jumped out of the hatch.

His roving eyes soon spied the boy clambering out on the davit, and with a hoarse scream of rage he sprang for the side of the vessel.

Jack saw him coming and he made a dive at the tackle, sliding down like a flash.

"Shove off, for your lives!" he cried, with frantic earnestness.

"What do yez mane?" demanded the mate, in astonishment, "as the sailor let go the tackle and the other pushed the boat away from the side of the brigantine with his oar."

"Mean! Look there! Pull, for heaven's sake. He'll swamp us if he leaps."

Jack pointed at the gigantic form of the ape, which had jumped, chattering with fury, upon the davit, and remained there, fortunately, looking down with blood-red eyes at the receding boat.

"Howly St. Patrick! Give way, ye spalpeens!" cried the mate, asking for no further explanation just then, for the sight of the ferocious animal gave him a cold shiver, and he as well as the two sailors were as eager as the boys to put as great a space between themselves and the ape as possible in the shortest space of time.

CHAPTER XI.

RESCUED.

"Howld on, me bullies!" cried the mate of the schooner, when the boat had placed a safe distance between itself and the brigantine. "Let's take a look at that apparishun. "May me sowl rist in glory, if I ever saw the like of that baste before! Where did it come from, me laddybucks?" turning to the two boys. "Faith, it's an orang-outang, or me eyes desaive me."

"It's an immense ape," replied Jack.

"Sure, it's all the same. How came the baste aboard the brig?"

While they were watching the animal, which still squatted upon the davit, looking at them, Jack, in as few words as possible, roughly sketched the adventures of his companion and himself from the moment they stepped on board of the ill-fated vessel until the schooner's boat came alongside.

The mate and two sailors listened to his singular narrative in unfeigned astonishment.

"Then it's not sailors ye are, at all, at all, at all?" said the mate.

"No, sir."

"And yet ye carried that ould hooker through the late gale, a part of which we experienced ourselves, without goin' to the bottom? Faith, it's wonders ye are!"

"We couldn't have carried her much further, for she's making water fast," answered Jack. "I don't believe she'll swim two hours longer."

"I don't belave she will meself, from the look of her. It's lucky for ye that we came up when we did, or ye'd have gone to the bottom in her. And now maybe ye'll be after tellin' me your names, and where ye hail from?"

"My name is Jack Ashmore, and my friend's is Bob Oakley. We hail from Clifton, near Boston."

"Then it's Americans ye are, the more power to your elbows! Sure, the skipper made out the British flag flyin' Jack-down from your foretop."

"I cannot say just what the nationality of the vessel is, but I think she's English. Her name is The Singapore, from Bombay, India."

"I don't wonder that baste, when he got loose, made Rome

howl aboard the brig. But, faith, the officers might have killed him, I should think. Perhaps it's cowards they were when it came to a pinch. It's fortunate for ye that the baste was so drunk when ye went aboard that he fell into the hold, or he might have made mincemeat of ye. Now, then, me boyhees," to the sailors, "give way."

The boat was soon alongside the schooner, which the boys presently learned was the *Molly Sewell*, Captain George Hathaway, master, bound from New York to Nassau, in the Bahamas.

The captain was standing near the wheel, with a fair young girl, his daughter, by his side.

She appeared to be about sixteen years of age, and the boys thought she made a pretty picture with her unconfined golden hair floating in the breeze.

Jack and Bob tumbled on board and walked aft to pay their respects to the skipper and to thank him for laying to and rescuing them from certain death.

The captain was undoubtedly surprised to see only two boys come off from the dismantled brigantine, when he expected to have to receive on board her whole complement of officers and crew.

His first thought was that the bulk of the brig's people had been washed overboard in the gale which had freckled her, the tail-end of which the schooner had encountered herself.

Captain Hathaway was a fine, hearty, pleasant-featured man, tough and bronzed by years of service on the ocean highway, and the boys were favorably impressed by his personality as he came forward to meet them.

"Well, my lads," he said, somewhat surprised by their genteel and unnautical appearance, "were you the only ones aboard yonder brig?"

"Yes, sir," replied Jack.

"What is that other thing on the bulwarks? I was examining it through the glass. It looked like an enormous specimen of the monkey species."

"It's an ape, sir, and a mighty fierce one."

"Indeed. What is the name of the brig? Where does she hail from, and where bound?"

Jack told him.

"Were you caught in the recent gale?"

"Yes, sir."

"The officers and crew—what became of them?"

"I don't know, sir."

"You don't know?" cried the captain, astonished at the answer. "What am I to understand from that?"

"If you will listen to our story you will understand," answered Jack, with a glance of admiration at the girl, who had come forward to her father's side.

"I shall be glad to hear what you have to say, my lad," said the skipper, while the mate was having the schooner put on her course again. "Didn't you bring any of your dunnage off with you?"

"No, sir. There was nothing belonging to us aboard the brig."

"Nothing belonging to you aboard of her?" said the captain, clearly much mystified.

"No, sir. Nothing at all. We did not belong to her."

Both the captain and his daughter regarded the boys as if they thought they were mild types of lunatics.

That they didn't know what had become of the brig's company, that they had no property aboard of her, and asserted that they did not belong to her, seemed incomprehensible to them.

Before Jack began his story Captain Hathaway asked them their names.

Jack answered for himself and Bob.

"So you are Americans, and hail from the neighborhood of Boston?" said the skipper.

"Yes, sir."

The schooner was now passing close astern of the brigantine, which had by this time settled almost to her bends in the sea, and attention was diverted from the boys to the huge ape, now hopping about the poop, and chattering frantically, as if he had a suspicion of his approaching fate.

The girl shuddered as she gazed at the monstrous beast, and all aboard the schooner were agreed that he was the largest specimen of his kind they had ever seen.

The ape sprang upon the ratlines and nimbly made his way to the maintop, where he squatted and glared down at the people on the *Molly Sewell*'s deck.

He seemed to recognize particularly the figures of Jack and Bob, and as the schooner left the brig astern he jumped around the top so as to keep them in sight.

It was clear to the onlookers that half an hour would see the last of the sinking craft, so rapidly was she filling.

"Now, my lad, you may go on with your story," said Captain Hathaway, turning to Jack as the fated brigantine fell astern.

Ashmore lost no time in doing so, beginning with their trip in the catboat to North Shoal and stating how they had been overtaken by the fog while at anchor; how they had floated away from their anchorage, and how in the early light of Sunday morning they had discovered and boarded the deserted brigantine heading in for Boston harbor.

Then he went on to state the condition they found the vessel's cabin and pantry in; their determination to sail the brig into port and claim salvage, but how their purpose was defeated by the sudden springing up of the gale which had carried them miles and miles away, they knew not whither, except that they had a general idea that it was to the south.

Jack detailed their strenuous experience during the continuance of the gale, in which the craft had lost her top-hamper and, as it subsequently proved, had sprung a leak; and what they had done when the weather cleared up to the moment they had sighted the schooner heading in their direction.

Captain Hathaway, his daughter, and the mate, whose name was Terrence McSwiggle, who had already heard an outline of it from the boy, listened to Jack's story with no little wonder.

It amazed them to hear that two inexperienced youths could strip a 300-ton brig of all her canvas in time to meet the gale, and then were able to carry the vessel through the worst of it without sending her to the bottom.

The girl gazed on the boys, particularly Jack, who chiefly attracted her eye, with evident admiration.

She was something of a sailor herself, having sailed many voyages with her widowed father, and had picked up a good deal of practical knowledge of seamanship.

She realized what the boys had been up against, and how gallantly they had met the issue and come through it with credit to themselves.

Captain Hathaway expressed his sympathy with the boys and welcomed them to the hospitality of the schooner.

He also complimented them on their nerve and pluck, and the seamanship they had displayed while aboard the brigantine.

"This is my daughter Grace," he said, introducing the girl to them, "and this is Mr. McSwiggle, my mate."

The boys bowed politely to each.

"We are bound to Nassau, the capital of New Providence, and the chief town in the Bahama Islands. If you wish to remain aboard the schooner after we reach that place I'll bring you back with me to New York."

Jack thanked the captain and said they would both be glad to render any service in return that they were able to perform.

"Very well, my lad. You and your companion may prove useful in one way or another between this and the time I land you both in New York. It is somewhat singular that you two are the second ones I have picked up since leaving port. Late yesterday afternoon we ran across the wreck of a small sailboat with a native West Indian aboard. He was nearly dead from exhaustion, having been two nights and the better part of three days at sea without a particle of food. Most wonderful of all, he says he weathered the gale in that cockleshell in which we found him. It seems almost incredible. The only account of his situation we could get out of him was that he was blown offshore from the neighborhood of Boston, just like yourselves."

Jack looked at Bob, and the latter returned his look.

The same unpleasant thought had occurred to each.

"There he is yonder, sunning himself near the galley pipe," said the skipper.

The boys turned around and looked.

Their suspicions were confirmed the moment their eyes rested on the other rescued chap.

It was Quassamodo.

CHAPTER XII.

GRACE HATHAWAY.

The black man, who had recognized them when they first came on board, was looking at them in a stealthy, cunning way that did not serve to reassure the boys.

His presence aboard the schooner was like a damper on their spirits.

They knew that his feelings toward them were not of a friendly character.

Neither of the boys betrayed the uneasiness they felt at the presence of this rascal aboard the schooner, nor did either enlighten the captain as to the fact of their having met the black man before under rather thrilling circumstances.

It brought back to both, however, the thought of the treasure chart, which had slipped their minds during their stay aboard the brigantine.

Perhaps they thought it a rather remarkable coincidence that they should meet Quassamodo again under the present unusual circumstances.

The captain turned from them and went down into the small cabin to see what arrangements he could make to accommodate his unexpected visitors.

There were four tiny rooms leading off the cabin proper, two on either side.

One was occupied by Captain Hathaway, and the adjoining one by his daughter.

On the other side, the mate had the room facing the captain's, while the next one was fitted up and used as a pantry.

Captain Hathaway decided that the boys would have to sleep on the pantry floor, as there was no other place for them.

While he was below Miss Grace took charge of the boys.

The three took seats on the rise of the cabin trunk, or roof, near the sailor who was at the wheel.

In front of the wheel, where the steersman could look in at it, was the hooded binnacle containing the compass, and behind that, with just enough intervening space to reach it, was the companion stairs, brass-bound steps leading down into the cabin.

The cabin could also be reached at the opposite end, through a kind of scuttle and a short ladder.

This entrance was used by the cook in going to and from the galley, which was an annex to the forecastle.

"You boys are very fortunate in escaping from so many perils," said Grace, glancing demurely at Jack. "I'm afraid your parents are greatly worried over your disappearance."

"I have no parents to be worried about me," replied Jack, soberly. "I'm an orphan. It's different with Bob here. He has both a father and mother, and I have no doubt they are all broke up about him."

Jack then told Grace how he had lost his position in the store where he had been working since the preceding fall, and how he was about to go to work for the boatbuilder on the Monday of the present week.

"I'm afraid this adventure of ours will cost me the job, for Mr. Peaseley will have to hire another assistant," he said.

"Don't worry," replied Bob. "Mr. Peaseley will keep the place open for you when he learns that you will soon be back, and that it was through no fault of yours that you are away from Clifton."

"Do you work, too, Mr. Oakley?" asked Grace.

"Oh, no; I go to the Winston High School. This is my vacation, and I'd just as soon be down in this part of the world as any other so long as my father and mother know that I am all right. In fact, now that things are going to end so satisfactorily, I'm rather pleased than otherwise with our adventure. I'll have a bang-up story to tell the boys when I get back. I'll be the cock of the walk during the whole of next term."

"Say, Miss Grace," said Jack, suddenly changing the conversation, "did you ever hear of Turk's Island? It's somewhere down in the Caribbean Sea, I guess."

Bob glanced at his companions, for he remembered that the word "Turk's" was written in sympathetic ink on the treasure chart.

"There is such an island in the Bahama group," replied Grace. "It is one of the last in the bunch. My father will point it out to you on his chart."

"It is some distance from Nassau, then?"

"Oh yes. Several hundred miles to the southeast, I should think. The Island of New Providence is near the center of the principal group, and is less than 200 miles southeast of Florida. It is quite a considerable distance from Hayti, which is separated from the eastern end of Cuba by the Windward Passage, a great highway to the Caribbean Sea."

"Well, Bob and I are particularly interested in Turk's Island," said Jack.

"Why?"

"Well, it's something of a secret. Perhaps I'll tell you when we reach Nassau."

"I've never heard that there was anything very interesting about Turk's Island," remarked Grace. "Here comes my

father. I'll ask him about it. Papa, Mr. Ashmore wants to know something about Turk's Island. I told him it was somewhere to the north of Hayti, one of the last of the Bahama group."

"It is. What do you want to know about the island, my lad? It's a bare and desolate bit of land, a few miles east of the Caicos group, and about 100 miles north of Hayti."

Jack said that was all he wanted to know, and the conversation changed to other topics.

In a little while the cook announced that dinner was ready, so Captain Hathaway invited his guests to step below and partake of it.

During the meal Jack got on very friendly terms with Grace, who sat at the end of the table opposite her father.

Mr. McSwiggle wasn't present, for he never left the deck until the captain came up, and he always ate his meals by himself.

Captain Hathaway told the boys that they would have to put up with a shakedown in the pantry, as that was the best accommodations he had to offer.

"That's all right, cap'n," replied Jack. "Bob and I don't mind a little thing like that. We've been roughing it pretty well for the last three days and we're getting accustomed to that sort of thing. This is really the first decent meal we have had since Saturday."

Grace laughed.

The captain went on deck and the mate came down and took his place.

Mr. McSwiggle proved to be so amusing that when Grace and Jack rose to go on deck Bob remained at the table to listen to another of his stories.

Grace and Jack walked the deck together, going as far forward as the forecastle scuttle, and then back to the break or rise of the cabin trunk.

The day was magnificent, the wind being just strong enough to keep the sails well filled and to heel the schooner slightly to the leeward.

The booms were out to starboard, which left the port, or weather side of the craft, free for their promenade.

Jack and Grace found this tete-a-tete of theirs very pleasant.

We are willing to believe that Jack was glad that Bob found the mate's company so entertaining that he remained below with him while he at his dinner.

In fact, it was a case where two is company and three is a crowd.

All of which Bob understood later on.

CHAPTER XIII.

THE THEFT OF THE TREASURE CHART.

When Bob found that Jack and Grace were rather partial to each other's society he contented himself with the mate's company whenever that man was not too busy with his duties.

Bob also kept a sharp eye on Quassamodo when the black man was on deck.

On the morning following the boys' rescue, and while Jack and Grace were standing by the taffrail behind the steersman, looking at the schooner's eddying wake and talking quite confidentially together, the West Indian approached Bob, who was sunning himself alongside the foremast.

The black man grinned in a friendly way.

"Me wish Massa Oakley berry happy good mornin'," he said in an oily tone.

Bob regarded him suspiciously.

"You've got an awful nerve to talk to me after the way you drew a knife on my friend Jack Saturday morning."

"Me berry sorry dat me no behave like gen'leman on dat 'casione. S'pose um 'cept berry humble 'pology, eh?"

"All right. Let it go at that," replied Bob, carelessly.

The black man grinned craftily and glided away.

In the meantime Jack had made such progress in the girl's good graces that he showed her the treasure chart and explained it fully.

He placed the paper in the sun till the heat brought the invisible writing out and then permitted her to read it.

She was greatly interested and not a little excited at the idea that here was a treasure hidden on a little island only twelve miles from Turk's.

While she was holding the paper in her hand a puff of wind blew it from her fingers and it came within an ace of going overboard.

In fact, it would have done so only for the low bulwark of the schooner against which it lodged.

Grace recovered it quickly, but not before Jack had experienced quite a shock.

"I thought it was gone for good," he said.

"I should never have forgiven myself if it had gone overboard," she replied, with some concern. "If I were you I'd make a copy of it and let your friend keep it. Then, if by chance you should happen to lose the original, you would still be able to use the copy if the chance occurred for you to get to the Little Key."

After what had just happened Jack thought her advice good.

He made a copy of the paper as it looked ordinarily, and on the back he wrote the words that were only visible when the original was heated.

This duplicate he subsequently turned over to Bob, with the injunction to put it carefully away in an inner pocket.

That afternoon the schooner sailed into the harbor of Nassau and came to anchor.

Captain Hathaway went ashore in the boat, and he took Quassamodo with him, much to the satisfaction of the two boys.

The skipper, before he returned, sent a cable message to Bob's father, assuring him of his son's safety, and Jack's as well.

On the following day the Molly Sewell was hauled into one of the docks and the stevedores started in to unload her.

Before they were half through Captain Hathaway came aboard and told the boys that, contrary to expectations, he was not going to return to New York immediately.

"I have accepted a cargo for Porto Plata, Hayti," he said, "and will sail for the island immediately the consignment is aboard. As I suppose you lads will want to return to the United States at once, I will advance you the money to pay your steamer fares and other expenses, and the money can be remitted to me, care of my shipping firm at New York."

This was unpleasant news to Jack, who had calculated on the companionship of Grace on the homeward trip, and he hastened to communicate the intelligence to the girl.

"Why not go with the schooner to Hayti, Jack?" she said, earnestly.

She had got to calling him Jack now, while he addressed her as Grace.

"I should like nothing better," he replied, eagerly; "but I'm afraid your father wouldn't care to be bothered with Bob and me any longer than is necessary. He's already done a whole lot for us as it is, and we are very much obliged to him."

There was no doubt about Jack's willingness, and he said he would answer for Bob, so Grace interviewed her father and the matter was soon arranged to the satisfaction of all parties.

"Who knows," said the girl that evening after supper, "but you may find an opportunity to visit the Little Key of your treasure chart and hunt for the buried gold? Porto Plata is only 100 miles to the south of Turk's Island. If you would take my father into the secret I am almost sure he would sail the schooner to the Little Key and give you every assistance in searching for the treasure."

"I'll do it, Grace. You and I will tell him together on the run to Hayti."

About half-past eleven that night, while all was quiet on the wharf and aboard the schooner, a dark-skinned figure glided down the dock like a ghostly shadow and slipped on board of the Molly Sewell.

He crouched upon the deck and listened intently.

The sailor whose duty it was to keep watch between eight and midnight had just stepped down into the gallery to light his pipe.

The dark-skinned intruder had kept track of his movements, and as soon as his head disappeared below the deck he darted down the midship entrance into the cabin.

He went directly to the pantry and tried the door.

It was not locked, as he supposed.

He entered the little room and saw Jack and Bob sleeping side by side on their mattress.

Their garments were hanging around on nails.

The intruder, who the reader will guess was Quassamodo, stealthily examined the garments he believed to be Ashmore's.

Ere long he drew out the treasure chart he so eagerly desired to possess.

Examining it by the moonlight that shone through a dead-light, he uttered a grunt of satisfaction, concealed the paper in his shirt, and crept from the room as silently as he had entered it.

Then he left the schooner with the same caution as he had boarded her, made his way up the wharf and vanished into obscurity beyond.

CHAPTER XIV.

AFTER THE TREASURE.

Next day the Molly Sewell finished discharging her cargo, and the goods consigned to Porto Plata were brought down to the wharf to be stowed on board.

It took about twenty-four hours to complete the loading, and as the tide served about ten o'clock, and it was a brilliant moonlight night, the schooner hauled out of her berth and started for Hayti via the southern passage between Exuma keys and the Tongue of the Ocean.

Grace and the boys remained on deck until nearly midnight, admiring the beauty of the seascape, and then turned in.

When they appeared on deck in the morning the schooner was bowling along under the influence of a strong wind, with Great Exuma Island on the vessel's port quarter.

After dinner Jack told Captain Hathaway he had something important to tell him, and they went on deck together, where they were presently joined by Grace.

Then Jack told the skipper the story of the treasure chart.

Captain Hathaway was rather astonished, and somewhat incredulous, but Grace assured him she herself had already seen the chart and read the secret writing.

"Well," said her father, "let me see it, and perhaps I may be able to tell you whether there is anything in it or not."

Jack put his hand in his inside pockets, but to no purpose.

"It is gone," he finally said, with a blank look.

"Gone!" said the captain, and the word was echoed by his daughter.

"Yes, it's gone. I've lost it somehow. I never saw such hard luck."

"Never mind," said Grace, reassuringly. "You know that at my suggestion you made a copy of it and gave it to your friend Bob to keep. Go down and ask him for it. He's in the cabin talking to Mr. McSwiggle."

Jack obeyed her with alacrity.

Bob was surprised to learn of the disappearance of the treasure chart, but he produced the copy, and Jack took it on deck to show it to the captain.

Captain Hathaway read the abbreviations without any trouble.

"Little Key, about four leagues southwest of Turk's Island. Latitude about 20 degrees, 51 minutes; longitude 71 degrees, 15 minutes."

The directions for locating the treasure he translated as follows:

"Six fathoms east-southeast from high tide. Twenty fathoms west by south to palmetto tree. Dig five feet. Take bearings from north side of the island, about midway off the shore from end to end of the island. Bring five palmetto trees in line, grove with coffin bearing southeast."

The only unintelligible thing about it was the word "coffin."

"It can't refer to a real coffin," remarked the captain, "for that looks ridiculous to me as a landmark. It must mean some natural object that looks like a coffin—a rock of some size, for instance."

Jack agreed with the captain's idea, and then asked him if he thought well enough of the whole matter to undertake an investigation of the treasure-trove after leaving Porto Plata.

Captain Hathaway caressed his whiskers reflectively for a moment or two and then said he would consider the question and let him know later.

On the second day of their stay at Porto Plata Captain Hathaway told Jack that a profitable charter had been offered him to take a cargo to Kingston, Jamaica, but that he would have to wait three or four days in port for the stuff to arrive in town from the interior.

"Now, my lad, I have been thinking that this will give you an opportunity of visiting the Little Key in a way that I am about to suggest. There is a small schooner-yacht in the harbor belonging to the head of the house with whom I am doing business. I can have the use of it during the time the Molly Sewell is detained here, and it will cost me nothing outside of the running expenses of the trip. I think that under Mr. McSwiggle's guidance you two boys will be able to run over to the latitude and longitude where the Little Key is supposed to be, about 75 miles north, and if you find it you will have a whole day or so to make your investigations. I have already spoken to the mate and he has promised to see you through. Are you ready to undertake the trip? For, if you are, it will be well for you to start at

once—not later than this afternoon, in order to have as much time as possible to hunt up the Little Key, which is probably a very small island, not easy to be discovered at a distance."

"I'm ready to start off at once," replied Jack, enthusiastically, "and I'll guarantee that Bob will be just as eager to go as I am, as soon as I lay your proposition before him."

"Very well, then, I will consider the matter settled," said Captain Hathaway. "I will arrange for the use of the yacht at once, and Mr. McSwiggle will attend to the rest."

As soon as Jack conveyed the joyful news to Bob, his friend was simply tickled to death, and crazy to be off as soon as possible.

"But I want to go with you, too," said Grace, in an animated tone.

"I should be glad to have you come along," said Jack, "if your father will let you. The question is, will he?"

"I mean to tease him till he consents," she said resolutely, for her mind was set upon going to the Little Key with the mate and the boys.

Grace, however, insisted that she preferred to go treasure-hunting, and the captain finally reluctantly consented to let her go under the protection of his mate.

At three o'clock that afternoon the yacht sailed from Porto Plata with a merry and enthusiastic little party on board, the mate standing the first trick at the wheel.

CHAPTER XV.

THE TREASURE CHEST.

The wind was light and the yacht made very slow progress toward its destination.

That didn't greatly worry the party, as they had the whole night before them to make the run of seventy-odd miles to the immediate vicinity of the Little Key, which they confidently hoped to sight soon after sunrise.

The coast of Hayti had long since faded below the horizon behind them, and they were surrounded by a boundless waste of gently-swelling water.

As the weather held perfectly fair, with scarcely more than a four-knot breeze, Bob was intrusted with the helm from eight to midnight, the rest turning in.

At twelve o'clock he called the mate, who put in four hours and then aroused Jack.

In less than an hour the sun peeped above the watery horizon, and daylight came on as quickly as it faded out the evening before.

There had been no change in the weather, and the barometer indicated a continuance of the same conditions.

The lightness of the wind, which had now dropped to less than three knots, was the only feature that hinted at a possible failure of the expedition through a calm.

While Grace was getting breakfast the mate and the boys maintained a sharp lookout.

Nothing appeared until after the meal was finished, then Jack, who was standing forward, saw what looked to be a small, flat cloud lying a couple of points off the bows.

He called the mate's attention to it, and Mr. McSwiggle, after sighting it with his glass, pronounced it an island, and probably the one they were looking for.

The yacht's course was altered a bit, and now all was excitement among the young people.

In a short time all on board were able to distinguish a fringe of trees rising apparently from the water.

"How far off is it now, Mr. McSwiggle?" asked Jack.

"About five miles."

An hour later they were within less than a mile of the island, and the mate directed Jack to take soundings as they proceeded closer in.

Ashmore found that the water shoaled rapidly, and kept Mr. McSwiggle informed of the depth shown by the lea line.

The yacht, however, drew so little water that they were able to go within two hundred yards of the island before the mate ordered the anchor over.

"Hold on, Mr. McSwiggle, this is the southeast shore, isn't it?"

"Yes."

"We want to keep on around to the north shore and anchor about midway of the island."

The mate changed the vessel's course and she swept around the end of the key, and then proceeded along the north shore, coming to anchor in a spot indicated by Jack.

Had the yacht turned the western instead of the eastern end, her people would have seen a stout sloop anchored close inshore, and that circumstance would rather have disconcerted them.

"There's the five trees in a row with the grove," cried Bob, excitedly, pointing shoreward, as the yacht swung easily from her anchor.

All hands looked and saw the landmarks plainly enough.

"I think that settles all doubt as to the genuineness of the information we got from the treasure chart," said Jack, with sparkling eyes.

Bob and Grace fully agreed with him.

"It will soon be high tide, supposing the calculations we made at Porto Plata are substantially correct," said Jack. "So we'd better get ashore at once and get down to business."

The yawl was lowered, the various articles required were tossed into her, and then all hands left the yacht to look after herself and proceeded to the beach.

"Now," said Bob, after the implements had been tossed on the shore, "what shall we do first? Whereabouts along high tide do we begin from?"

"At a spot in line with the five palmettos, then the grove ought to bear southeast."

"What about the coffin? I don't see anything that looks like one?" said Bob.

"As there seems to be only one grove, I don't believe this reference to a coffin cuts much ice now. However, while I'm taking a sight at those trees you can run over to the grove and see what you can see."

Boy obeyed and soon disappeared among the trees of the grove.

Jack got the trees in line and then called for the compass, which he placed on the ground at that spot.

Then he took the piece of round hardwood, wound with knotted cord, which he had found in the mast with the treasure cart, from his pocket.

This, he had already ascertained, carried exactly twenty fathoms of line, marked off by knots at every six feet.

He unwound the cord and then waited patiently for the tide to reach its highest point on the beach.

At length, when the flow of water seemed to have reached its limit, Jack inserted the peg into the sand in exact line with the five palmetto trees.

Then he told the mate to take a sight with the compass east-southeast from the stake, while he counted off six fathoms of the line and walked off with it.

When he held the line taut from the stake across the glass face of the compass the mate sighted and directed Jack when he had reached the proper spot, where he drove another stake in the sand.

Mr. McSwiggle then replaced the original stake by another.

Jack pulled the released stake toward him, stuck it beside the other and walked toward the first palmetto tree.

The distance proved to be exactly the length of the whole line.

The mate sighted the line to make sure, and found that it ran west by south.

"The spot to dig is where the two stakes are," said Jack, winding up the line and replacing it in his pocket.

They brought the shovels up and began to dig, Grace, who had been an interested observer of the preliminary proceedings, standing close by and watching them.

They got down three feet, and then paused to rest.

"Bob ought to show up and do his share of the work," remarked Jack, wiping the perspiration from his brow. "Bob! hi, Bob!" he shouted, but there was no answer. "He must have gone clean on across the island, or to the west end, on an exploration expedition. I don't see why he did so at this particular time."

Then they resumed digging.

In a few minutes the mate's shovel struck a hard substance.

He rapidly uncovered the object of resistance.

It proved to be the end of a small sea chest.

"By George!" cried Jack, excitedly. "I believe we've struck the treasure!"

CHAPTER XVI.

THE TREASURE OF LITTLE KEY.

He jumped into the hole and tossed out the rest of the sand, uncovering the whole of the chest, which was bound with copper bands, covered with solid knobs, and looked to be quite old-fashioned.

More digging had to be done around the chest before they could get at the handles to dislodge it.

When they started to lift it from the hole they found it mighty heavy, and it took all their strength and ingenuity to land it on the surface.

While they were thus engaged, with Grace looking on, deeply interested, a black man, who for some time had been observing their movements from the shelter of the grove, made his appearance and advanced stealthily toward them by a roundabout way.

When the chest was pulled out of the hole, he was not a dozen feet away.

Even then they did not observe him, for Mr. McSwiggle, noticing that the lock of the chest looked to be broken, struck it with the point of his shovel and part of it fell to the sand.

Jack was standing in the hole when the mate seized the cover of the chest and flung it open.

Both he and McSwiggle uttered an exclamation of satisfaction, while Grace bent forward and gave a little cry of delight as the rays of the morning sun flashed upon hundreds of bright, yellow coins, piled pell-mell in the chest.

At that moment the black man, none other than the West Indian himself, sprang at the girl, with open arms. He had been taken to the locality on a steamer, which accounted for his being there ahead of Jack's party.

"Help! Help!" screamed Grace, as Quassamodo, seizing her in his arms, started for the underbrush.

"Drop her, you thafe of the wurruld!" roared McSwiggle, dashing after the negro.

The girl's screams brought Jack out of the hole in short order.

"It's that rascal Quassamodo," cried Jack, instantly joining in the pursuit.

The West Indian was fleet-footed, and, even handicapped as he was, outstripped them to the grove, into which he vanished.

When Jack and Mr. McSwiggle came out on the other side of the grove Quassamodo was just pushing off from the beach in a boat with the girl.

Jack and the mate dashed down to the waters' edge, and here they were blocked.

The West Indian stopped his boat a few yards away and favored them with a triumphant grin.

Jack, with a cry of anger, sprang into the water and began to swim toward the boat.

Quassamodo seized his oars and rowed a little farther out.

Then he drew a pistol from his belt and pointed it at the boy's head.

Jack saw that the black man had him where the hair was short, so he reluctantly turned around and returned to the beach.

Quassamodo then lay on his oars and watched the consultation that took place between Jack and the mate.

"There's only one thing to do, Mr. McSwiggle," said the boy. "That is to return to the yacht, slip the anchor, put up sail and chase that rascal. We can overhaul him hand over hand in our boat."

"Sure, that's what we will do, faith," replied the mate.

The West Indian pulled in a little closer.

"What um ready to do, eh? No care to talk all day," he said, impatiently.

"Go to blazes!" roared the mate. "Come, Jack, we'll follow your plan. There's a rifle on board. We'll be able to pick the rascal off with it before he's got half a mile from the island."

They turned to retreat, when Quassamodo gave a yell of rage.

"Stop! Me shoot! Kill um and take all de treasure for umself if no settle."

As Jack and the mate were within easy range of the rascal's revolver, this threat created a fresh complication.

They stopped short, undecided whether to take the risk of drawing the black man's fire or not.

While matters were in this shape a head appeared above the side of the sloop.

This head belonged to Bob Oakley.

He had managed to free himself from the ropes with which Quassamodo had tied him, and then crawled out of the little cabin, if the box-like space in the forepart of the craft could be so denominated.

Looking cautiously over the side of the sloop he saw Grace Hathaway lying unconscious in the rowboat, with her captor threatening his friend Jack and the mate with his revolver.

Noticing that the current around the island was in Quassamodo's direction, an idea struck him.

He got out his jack-knife and, crawling forward, severed the rope by which the sloop was moored.

The craft at once began to drift toward the rowboat unnoticed by the black man, whose eyes and attention were centered on Jack and McSwiggle.

Bob then picked up one of the heavy stones with which the sloop was ballasted, and the moment he got within easy throwing distance of the rowboat he rose to his feet and fired it at Quassamodo.

It took the black man on the back of the neck, and with a yell the rascal pitched into the sea.

The rowboat began to drift shoreward, followed by the sleep.

Quassamodo came to the surface and struck out for the boat in a weak way.

The sloop, however, overtook him, and Bob, reaching down, seized him by the collar.

Jack, in the meantime, had dashed into the water again, swam to the rowboat and helped it shoreward just as Grace was recovering from her faint.

The mate dashed in, caught the boat and lifted the girl ashore.

Seeing that she was all right, he jumped into the boat and pushed off toward the sloop, to help Bob make a prisoner of the West Indian.

The rascal was secured and bound, hand and foot, and then the mate told Jack to return with Grace to where they had left the treasure chest, while he and Bob worked the sloop around the island by water.

"Oh, dear," said Grace, "what a fright I had!"

"Never mind," said Jack, putting his arm around her waist, a liberty she did not resent, "you're all right now. We've made a prisoner of the fellow, and he'll go to jail when we get back to Porto Plata."

They took their time getting back to the treasure ground, and during the walk Jack managed to get a certain promise from Grace that made him very happy.

When the sloop arrived and was tied to the yacht, Bob told Jack and Grace how he had been set upon and secured by Quassamodo soon after he entered the grove, and was then carried by the black aboard the sloop and left bound in the cabin.

The treasure having been found, all hands were now anxious to return to Hayti.

The treasure was carried off to the yacht in the yawl and placed in the cabin.

Then, setting sail, with the sloop in tow, they steered southward.

During the trip the contents of the treasure chest was counted and found to contain something over \$200,000 in Spanish gold coin, of a coinage around 1801-20.

They reached Porto Plata early next morning and transferred the chest to the schooner, where it was exhibited to Captain Hathaway when he returned from his visit to the interior of the island.

The gold was exchanged for several letters of credit on a New York city bank, of which Jack took one for \$100,000; Bob one for \$50,000; Captain Hathaway one for \$25,000; Mr. McSwiggle one for \$15,000, while the remaining \$12,000 was presented to Grace.

When the schooner sailed for Jamaica, Quassamodo had been tried and sent to prison for a term of years.

Nearly three weeks later the Molly Sewell reached New York.

Bob started for home alone, as Jack had accepted an invitation to remain in the metropolis with Grace and her father.

Captain Hathaway decided to retire from active service, and the command of the schooner was given to Mr. McSwiggle.

Jack also decided to remain indefinitely in New York, where he could see Grace as often as he wanted.

He put his money in charge of a trust company to invest for him and took a position in the office of the shipping firm which owned the Molly Sewell.

Three years after he bought out the senior partner and the firm became Taylor & Ashmore.

The ink was hardly dry on the documents which made him a partner in the house than he was married to Grace Hathaway, and Bob Oakley came on from Clifton to act as his best man.

Although Jack and Bob seldom meet, they correspond regularly, and neither can forget their experience as Boy Gold Hunters when they were After a Pirate's Treasure.

Next week's issue will contain "TRICKING THE TRADERS; OR, A WALL STREET BOY'S GAME OF CHANCE."

SEND POSTAL FOR OUR FREE CATALOGUE

CURRENT NEWS

Squirrels have become so tame in Seventh street, Buffalo, N. Y., that they climb into the houses and eat anything they can find, according to a complaint made to City Forester Harry Filer. Jury Commissioner Robert C. Titus sent a complaint to the city forester that the squirrels have been climbing into his bedroom window and have been drinking his medicine and eating his pills during the absence of his nurse and while he has been sick in bed.

Even the fish in the Little Arkansas River are starting bank accounts and saving up their dimes and nickels. W. E. Smith, of No. 726 West Douglas avenue, was recently fishing just below the Central street dam and landed a big channel catfish weighing $1\frac{1}{2}$ pounds. The catch was a beauty and Mr. Smith hurried to extract the hook from its mouth. As he ran his finger through the fish's gill he found something metallic, and upon extracting it found it to be a bright, shiny 10-cent piece.

The sugar production of Formosa has risen since the island was taken over by the Japanese in 1895 from 75,000 to 350,000 tons annually. Millions of dollars have been invested by Japanese in sugar mills in Formosa, and the war has further stimulated the trade in sugar there. According to the Manchuria Daily News, 31,000 tons of Formosa sugar are to be sent to Australia, 3,000 tons to Hong-kong, 15,000 tons to Canada, and 25,000 tons to India, China, Manchuria, and Korea.

The battleships "Pennsylvania" and "Nevada" have been equipped with a new 3-inch anti-aircraft gun of very high velocity, which has given great satisfaction to the officers of the Bureau of Ordnance who have been working on the problem for two or three years past. Two of these guns will be mounted on each of the capital ships of the navy. According to a dispatch from Washington, they are to be mounted on the top of the gun turrets, a position, it is claimed, which will give them an excellent all-around arc of fire.

The following is said to be the Chinese method of catching fish: Take *coccus indicus*, pulverize and mix with dough, then scatter it broadcast over the water as you would sow seed. The fish will seize it with great avidity, and will instantly become so intoxicated that they will turn on top of the water by dozens, hundreds, or thousands, as the case may be. Then gather them up, and put them into tubs of clean water, and presently they will be as lively and healthy as ever. Their flesh is not injured in the least.

For the first time in the history of the Hongkong rice trade a shipment of polished rice has been made to the United States. This first shipment consisted of 100 tons, consigned to San Francisco. A rice-polishing machine of American make was recently installed at Hongkong, which is said to be the first ever taken to the Far East. Previous to the war rice was exported from China to Germany and there polished for the American market. A greatly increased direct trade in polished rice between the Orient and the United States is anticipated.

While Charles Barrow, a farmer of Milford, N. J., was mowing near his home the other afternoon he heard a cry behind him, and, turning, discovered that the blades of his mowing machine had caught his two-year-old daughter Clara and cut both legs from her body. Evidently the child, unknown to her father, had wandered into the grass, which was over three feet high, and had been caught in the path of the machine. Barrow rushed the child home. His wife fainted when she caught sight of his burden. A doctor from the Stroudsburg, Pa., hospital attended the child, but no hope is entertained that its life can be saved.

Thirteen little "mice" jumped out of a crate of bananas that the clerks in a local store were unwrapping and the men thought that they had better kill them. But the clerks noticed that they had long black tails, so a consultation was held before the battle continued. Two of the little "mice" were sent out to the University. Dr. H. H. Lane, of the Zoology Department, declared them to be a species of opossums found in Honduras. Dr. Lane believes that the mother was shipped in the crate of bananas from Honduras and gave birth to the thirteen little opossums while on her way to America, but that she escaped before the fruit arrived in Norman.

Another important move in Herr von Batoeki's campaign to conserve Germany's food resources has been taken. A general food census throughout the empire is announced to be completed by Sept. 1. This will extend even to private households. When the latter contain fewer than thirty members the food census will extend only to stocks of canned and smoked preserved meats and eggs. For the larger households, boarding houses, hotels, restaurants, public and private institutions, stores and factories there is a list of thirty-three food items. Takers of the food census are empowered to search all premises where they may suspect foodstuffs are stored. They further have the right to investigate the books of business firms and households. Heavy penalties are fixed for failure to report stocks of food, which are thereupon subject to confiscation.

TURNED OUT WEST

OR

THE BOY WHO FOUND A GOLD MINE

By GASTON GARNE

(A SERIAL STORY)

CHAPTER VIII (Continued).

"My dear Mr. Mack, you are violent. Positively violent!" retorted the stranger. "I have tried to explain, but you will have none of my explanation. I think it would be best for all concerned if I leave and call around some other time. Good-night."

Leon stood silent.

"I said good-night, Mr. Mack," repeated Pigeon.

"Go to thunder!" Leon burst out, his patience completely exhausted now.

"Oh, certainly," answered Mr. Pigeon. "Anything to oblige."

Then he tucked his umbrella under his arm again and trotted off over the desert as unconcernedly as though there were a hundred houses in full view, when the fact was that, so far as Leon knew, the nearest habitation was at Beasley, sixty miles away.

Leon watched him as he disappeared in the darkness going along the line of the cliffs in the direction from which he himself just came.

But he had no sooner departed than Leon began to blame himself for letting him go so, and not finding out the truth about this singular intrusion.

He had half a mind to call Mr. Pigeon back and question him further, although he was then just disappearing in the darkness, when his attention was suddenly attracted by hearing some one singing a comic song.

It was Jack!

Leon recognized the voice instantly.

"Jack! Jack!" he shouted.

"Hello!" came the response from the opposite direction to that taken by Mr. Pigeon. "That you, Leon, back again?"

Leon hurried forward to meet his partner.

"Where in the world have you been?" he cried.

Jack was sauntering along, smoking his pipe, and did not seem to be in the least disturbed.

"Been! Why, nowhere in particular," he answered. "I got restless, too, after you left and I thought I would take a walk in the other direction just to see if I could not discover the red rock and the mouth of the pass, or canyon, or whatever it is, we have got to go through. But what in the world is the matter, Leon? You look as though you had seen one of those old Jesuit ghosts already. What has happened? Out with it, boy!"

"Why, a whole lot has happened," replied Leon, excitedly. "Did you see that man?"

"What man?"

"This man."

Leon handed Jack the greasy card.

"Old Pete Pigeon!" cried Jack—there was still light enough to enable him to read the card. "Impossible!"

"Not at all. He was here just a minute ago. Do you know him?"

"Know him, yes. Of course I do, the old shyster. Why, everybody in Tombstone knows Pete Pigeon. He's a drunken old beast, but sharp, though—sharp as a whip."

"He looks the first all right, then, and he has been sampling your whisky, too."

"Out with it, Leon. Explain this mystery. How on earth could Pete Pigeon get here? He never has a cent. He could not raise the price of a horse. I don't see how he could get here unless he walked."

"He says he did," laughed Leon, and then he went on to explain all that had occurred.

"Come, this is serious," declared Jack. "In spite of all our precaution we have evidently been spied upon; but, Leon, where could the fellow that spoke have been if he wasn't in some hiding-hole behind the rocks?"

"I give it up," replied Leon. "I looked everywhere. I could find no hiding-hole, or anything which looked like one."

"Did you look overhead?"

"Yes, and the cliffs went straight up."

"Then it beats me. Did you look off on the desert?"

"Why, no; there was no use in that. The desert is as flat as a floor."

"Not on your life. There are sinks in the desert, you tenderfoot. Some of them are big enough to drop a town as large as Tombstone into. Like enough that's where the fellow was, and Pete Pigeon is one of his party. Here's a pretty kettle of fish."

"Suppose we go back there and investigate?"

"Not on your life. We'll stop by the horses, if you please. It's a wonder old Pigeon didn't fly off with one of them. He'd have done it, surest thing, if you had not happened to come along just as you did."

"But how could he have passed me on the desert without me seeing him? Explain that."

"Can't now, but I will in the morning. We have got to keep a sharp watch to-night, Leon, or we'll lose our horses as sure as you are alive. Let's see now how much of my whisky Pete has got away with. The full supply, probably. Gee whiz! Look here!"

One glance inside the tent was enough to show the boys what Lawyer Pigeon had been about.

Their traps looked as though a mad dog had been tearing them to pieces.

Every hamper, box and bag had been opened and their contents lay scattered about.

Mining tools and canned provisions were heaped up with the boys' personal belongings—the whole floor of the tent was strewn with the things.

"The scoundrel!" cried Leon. "And to think that he would have the nerve to stand there and jolly me the way he did, knowing what I should find if I looked inside the tent!"

"Nerve!" laughed Jack. "Why, that man has got nerve enough to pry the gold filling out of a fellow's tooth and jolly him to his face while he was doing it. Say, Leon, this means trouble, but we have got to take it as it comes."

Nothing came for one while.

After midnight they retired to the tent, for it was getting cool, and Jack rolled himself up in his blanket to take first sleep.

Leon lighted a lantern and sat down on a box to read a book he had brought along with him, thinking that would help him to keep awake and on the alert.

It did for a while, but by and by he began to get drowsy.

It seemed to him as if he must walk—as if nothing else would quiet his excited brain, and he pushed on over the sand, keeping close to the cliffs until he had covered about a mile, when he was suddenly brought to a halt by hearing a voice exclaim:

"What we want to do is to find those fellows, and to-night is the time to do it. We might hunt for a hundred years and then not find the Jesuit mine, but if that boy knows the secret, then the cheapest way is to trail him."

Who had spoken?

Leo could not see a soul.

Darkness was getting down over the desert, and the cliffs ahead seemed to all run together.

Leon listened for some answer to the words which he had heard as distinctly as if they had been spoken in his ear, but none came.

As the moments passed and silence continued to reign, Leon felt a cold chill running down his spine.

It was almost ghostly.

Surely there could not be anyone there in that lonely spot but himself.

Plucking up courage, he advanced slowly, going as much as a hundred years, but everywhere the line of the cliffs remained unbroken.

What could it mean?

"If there was anybody here they would surely

see me and sing out," thought Leon. "I can't make it out at all."

And now a superstitious terror, which he had never supposed he could feel, seized the boy.

He turned and ran for all he was worth.

If that mysterious voice had called to him to stop it would have been just what he expected, but it did not.

If a shot had come flying after him he would not have been a bit surprised, but that did not happen, either.

Soon he saw the tent ahead of him, and he came dashing up to it all out of breath.

To Leon's utter surprise, instead of Jack a man whom he had never laid eyes on before came walking out of the tent in answer to his shout.

He was a short, pudgy person of about middle age, with a face as red as fire, and a nose so swelled that it formed just a red knob which looked as if it might be stuck on his face with glue.

He wore a bob-tailed coat which would have been short for a man of two-thirds his height.

Add to this a battered plug hat and an old, faded cotton umbrella stuck under his arm and you have the picture.

As he came out of the tent, the fellow was wiping his mouth with his coat sleeve, and Leon caught a strong smell of whisky.

Jack had some of the stuff, and it was in the tent; there could be no doubt that this intruder had been helping himself to Jack's supplies.

"Ah there! Good evening! Good evening!" cried the stranger, bobbing his bullet head at Leon. "How are you? You'll be Mr. Mack, I suppose. Oh, how are you? Shake!"

He thrust out a hand so dirty that Leon drew back in disgust.

"You seem to know me," he said, "but I don't know you, and I don't know that I want to. Where's my partner?"

"Meaning Jack Fox's son?" demanded the stranger. "Young Fox, son of old Fox—a sly old Fox he was, too. Ha! Ha!"

"You haven't answered my question!" flashed Leon. "You are intruding here, and the fact that you seem to know us both don't make it one bit the less of an intrusion. Where is Mr. Fox? Do you know?"

"That's what I don't," was the reply. "I don't know, and to be frank with you, I don't care. My business is with you. I'm a lawyer; my name is Pigeon—Peter Pigeon. Here's my card."

He thrust a bit of dirty pasteboard at Leon upon which the name was just discernible in the fading light.

"I heard that you were about to bring suit against the man who calls himself by your name, and has taken charge of the Virgo Mine," he added, "so I thought I'd just drop around and see if you would like to retain me to look after your interests in the case."

(To be continued.)

ITEMS OF INTEREST

WOMAN ROPES ALLIGATOR.

Mrs. Will Hendricks is receiving the congratulations of her friends over having captured alive a large alligator. One evening recently she noticed the alligator trying to climb the hog wire fence of the L. O. Ireson pasture, Wharton, Tex., and she ran home and brought a rope with which she lassoed the reptile and tied it to a post. Those who were attracted to the spot to view the catch stated that the alligator was over six feet long and that it fought desperately to make its escape.

KILLS RATS AT FIVE CENTS EACH.

A. Grimley of Kildare, Okla., has several ferrets and he makes his living by taking these small animals to some farm and ridding the place of rats at five cents a head. His six ferrets killed 118 rats on one farm in forty minutes a few days ago, and are trained to put the rats in a pile outside the building when they catch them. Mr. Grimley has been following this occupation for several months.

EXPLORER'S EQUIPMENT.

American soldiers and militiamen doing duty along the border of reptile-infested Mexico would relish the adoption in the United States Army of a type of tent used by the National Geographic Society—Yale Expedition to Peru. Professor Hiram Bingham describes the explorers equipment in the National Geographic Magazine. He says:

"The general supplies include tents provided with heavy canvas floors sewed to the walls, and mosquito nets, making the tents practically insect and snake proof; saddles made especially for the narrow-backed Andean mules and fitted with cruppers and two heavy girths to prevent slipping on the steep trails; halter bridles (Peruvian saddle animals will rarely, if ever, drink without having the bit taken out of their mouths, so that the halter bridle with its bit connected by snap hooks is a great convenience); pack covers to keep the loads dry during the frequent rainstorms; duffle bags of the heaviest possible material; fiber cases and air-tight steel boxes.

"Besides these things we were prepared to furnish each member of the party with blankets, snow-glasses, folding bucket, folding wash-basin, cot, aluminum cooking outfit, small kerosene stove with Primus burner, folding brass lantern, sewing kit, canteen, pocket tool kit, rubber poncho, Winchester rifle, Colt revolver, camera, tripod and photographic record and calculator."

A CURIOUS GARDEN TRICK EXPLAINED.

A few years ago some of the leading English horticulturists were very much perplexed by certain experiments conducted by a French exhibitor. The

demonstrations were conducted in a very open manner, every one was allowed to examine freely, and it was agreed that there was nothing of the ordinary conjuring trick about the plan.

This is what the observers saw. A plant, perhaps a geranium on a rose bush, was brought forward in a large deep box of soil. Sometimes the plant was just growing in the open border. Although the specimen was full of buds, there were no expanded blooms to be seen. The demonstrator informed the onlookers that in about ten minutes he would have the plant covered with widely opened flowers. The procedure started with the watering of the soil over the roots. As soon as the ground was moist, the whole plant was at once covered with a glass shade. At the end of ten minutes the shade was removed, and the audience was amazed to see that the specimen was covered with blooms fully open. Everybody was asked to come forward and look at the plant closely, and also to gather the flowers. These were, of course, closely examined, and the most severe critic was bound to admit that there was nothing faked about the blooms.

The manner in which this instantaneous blooming of plants was brought about has been recently explained. In the first case care was taken to secure specimens in which the buds were as far developed as possible without having actually started to expand. Shortly before the time when it was intended to give the exhibition a shallow trench was dug out all around the plant. This was not quite deep enough to expose the main roots. Then all around this trench small lumps of quicklime were placed, with care not to put them actually in contact with the roots. When the quicklime was in position the soil was filled into the trench, and all was now ready for the experiment.

Sometimes it was declared that the liquid used was a magical concoction; as a matter of fact, it was plain water. After a thorough soaking of the soil the moisture quickly penetrates to the quicklime, and there is a great generation of heat. A certain amount of vapor arises, and this is kept around the plant by the glass shade. The heat in the soil and this warm vapor have an extraordinarily stimulating effect upon the plant, with the result that the flowers' buds are forced open. The opening is quite genuine, so that the blossoms will stand the closest examination.

The idea is an extension of a plan commonly followed by florists when it is desired to induce flowers to open fully, of placing the stalks for five minutes or so in almost boiling water. This has an amazing effect, for in a very short while the buds, previously tightly closed, are fully open. In the same way wild flowers which have wilted after picking may frequently be revived.

HAL, THE POOR BOY

OR

THE ADVENTURES OF TWO ORPHANS

By ED KING

(A SERIAL STORY)

CHAPTER XVII (Continued).

She ran away, and soon returned with a handsome gold-handled sword.

"That is my father's," she said. "If they break in, I will show them that I know how to use it, and you, Hal, shall see how much afraid I am."

"I'm sure you can fight," replied Hal. "You look brave clear through, miss."

"Don't flatter me. Terry ought to be armed, too."

She burst out laughing in a hysterical sort of way.

"There!" exclaimed Terry. "Now you are laughing at me, but I can't help it. I know I look like a perfect scarecrow, but we lost our clothes in the lake, so what could we do?"

"Never mind, Terry, I shall get used to you," Netta said. "As to your fighting, I don't know what to give you, unless it is the poker, and I'm afraid that it wouldn't be much use."

"It would be better than nothing, miss," said Terry. "As to fighting, I'm afraid I'm not much on that, but I'll do the best I can."

"Go straight through the hall into the kitchen. It is the last door on the left. You will find the poker there. It is a big one, and will be sure to make that wretch of a Slickens feel sick if he gets it over his head."

Terry had scarcely started when the convicts made their first move.

This was a ring at the door-bell. Modest enough, too. One which Netta would undoubtedly have answered if she had not been warned.

"Pay no attention to it!" whispered Hal. "Can't you slip upstairs and look out of some window and find out how many of them there are?"

"Certainly I can," replied Netta. And she hurried away.

The bell rang twice while she was gone, but the convicts made no other move.

"There are as many as twenty of them," Netta reported when she returned.

"Did you see Slickens?"

"Yes; he is there, and there is a big man with a fiery red head."

"That's Redny Ring. He is the leader of the gang."

"There was a big, fat man, with a dirty face, near him."

"That's Philadelphia. Oh, he's a bad one, too." Bang! Bang! Bang!

Finding that no attention was paid to the bell, the besieging party began kicking at the door.

"I think I had better speak to them," said Netta. "Let me do it," replied Hal.

"But they will know your voice."

"What of it? Besides, I hardly think they will. I never said very much to them."

"Hello!" he cried. "What's wanted? Who are you?"

"We want to speak a word to Kun'l Crofut," replied the voice of Redny Ring. "Is he to hum?"

"He can't see you," replied Hal. "You had better go away."

"Gee!" cried the hoarse voice of Philadelphia. "It's 2222 what's talking back. Didn't I tell you fellers? I knowed when we found him missing that the blamed little sneak had gone ahead to warn the gal."

"Never you mind who I am," retorted Hal. "You fellows want to go away or we'll make it hot for you, and there's enough of us here to do it, too."

"Break in the door!" shouted Philadelphia. "Some of you fellers tackle the windows! We are here to do business and not to talk!"

A tremendous kicking and pounding upon the door now began.

They could hear others wrenching at the shutters and trying to force them open.

The convicts had abandoned all attempts at secrecy now.

They were shouting to each other, and swearing horribly.

"I know it's you, 2222!" Philadelphia called out. "I'll make it hot for you when we get in, my buck! Blame me, if I don't kill you! That's what I'll do to you! I hain't got no use for a feller what goes back on his friends!"

"Hush! Don't answer him!" whispered Netta. "Terry, there is something you could do better than standing there with the poker! Come with me, and I will show you! Hal, you stand guard! I won't be gone but a minute!"

"If you hear them break in, you had better hide."

yourself somewhere," said Hal. "Twenty to one is heavy odds, miss, but I am going to do the best I can."

Netta took Terry into the next room and lighted a hand-lamp.

Then she led the way upstairs to the top of the house, where in the garret she pointed to a lot of heavy cannon-balls.

There was a battery stationed here at Cypress House in war times," she said. "These are some of the cannon-balls. Do you think you could drop them down on the heads of those fellows out of the windows. One or two ought to scatter them, I think."

"Of course I can," said Terry.

Netta opened the window and Terry came staggering on with a big cannon-ball.

It was all he could do to lift it up on the window sill, he was so weak.

He let go, and the next instant there was a loud thump on the piazza, followed by a sharp cry.

"Sufferin' mackerel! There's one feller knocked out with a broken shoulder!" roared Redny. "Well, I be blamed if it hain't a cannon-ball!"

"Look out you don't get another on your head!" shouted Slickens. "Dey's a hull lot ob 'em up dar in de garret, I know!"

Thump!

Another cannon-ball dropped just then, taking Slickens on the toe.

He roared with rage and pain and sprang off the piazza, followed by all hands.

They were just in time to escape a third ball, dropped by Netta.

For the moment the besieged had the better of the besiegers.

But would it last?

It was heavy odds—twenty against three.

CHAPTER XVIII.

HAL THROWS A BLUFF.

"Better give up hyar, boys, and try de back!" shouted Slickens. "Day hain't no winder in de back of de garret. Day kain't drop none ob dem cannon-balls down dar."

The suggestion was accepted, and all hurried around to the back of the house.

Netta and Terry came down stairs.

"That drove them off, Hal!" she exclaimed.

"It just drove them to the back of the house, that's all."

"I know. I heard what was said through the window. The shutters are good and strong there, and the door is heavily barred."

"We want to get around there, so as to be ready for them," said Hal.

Netta led the way to the end of the broad hall, which ran entirely through the large house.

A thunderous tattoo had already begun on the door.

"It hain't no sort of use!" shouted Slickens. "Dat thar do' is as firm as a rock, an' has got a big iron bar to it. Yo' kain't nebber break it down."

"What are we to do then?" demanded Redny. "We want to get in somehow, and it seems to me we are wasting a deuce of a lot of time."

"Come ober hyar an' I'll tell you," said Slickens. "I don't want them inside to hear?"

There was a whispered conversation then, which Hal, at the keyhole, strained his ear in vain to hear.

"I can't make out what they are saying. What do you suppose they mean to do?" he asked Netta.

"I'm sure I don't know," was the reply. "I only wish I did."

"I suppose Slickens knows the whole house very well?"

"Every part of it, from top to bottom."

"There may be some way of getting in that even you don't know anything about."

"It might be so. Still I hardly think it. Hark! What are they at?"

"They seem to be breaking glass."

"Oh, it is the cellar window!"

"Where is the door leading to the cellar?"

"This way! This way!"

Netta flew to the door, but, alas! there was no bolt here, and the key was gone out of the lock.

By this time the convicts were in the cellar.

"What can we do?" cried Netta.

"Can't we put something against the door?" asked Terry.

"It opens the wrong way for that. Don't you see?" said Hal. "If we only had a rope or something!"

"Too late!" cried Netta. "Here they are!"

The door flew open and the black convict known as 2284 sprang in.

Bang!

Hal fired.

The fellow got the full charge of buckshot and tumbled back with a yell.

"I knowed it! 2222!" roared Redny. "Charge, all hands! Thar's the gal! We have only got to down them to get our fingers on the dough!"

He did his best.

He sent the contents of the other barrel at Redny even as he spoke.

But Redny was quick enough to jump aside and avoid it.

Hal clubbed his gun then, and brought it down over the head of Philadelphia, while Terry struck at Slickens.

Philadelphia gave a furious yell, and, maddened with the pain of his head, he jumped on Hal, wrenching the gun from his hands, and dealt him a blow which knocked him senseless for the moment.

When he recovered himself, it was all over.

Netta was in the clutches of Slickens, and Terry was lying in the corner, with blood all over his face.

(To be continued.)

TIMELY TOPICS

Because of the recent death of two children by testing fluid in the cores of golf balls all golf clubs will be asked by the authorities to supply a list of wholesalers or manufacturers from whom they obtain supplies. This will facilitate the enforcement of the law against the sale of golf balls with fluid cores.

Chaplains of the Regular Army and National Guard on duty at Douglas, Ariz., have requested that the people of the country be advised that in sending presents to relatives or friends in the National Guard the packages be addressed in care of the chaplains attached to the particular regiment of which they are members. It has been found that many tons of supplies sent to National Guardsmen of various organizations have failed to reach the men and have been placed in storage at warehouses.

Tables compiled by John Barnes, bond editor of the Wall Street Journal, show that the debt of the Allies, Great Britain, France, Russia and Italy, has increased from \$17,465,000,000 in 1914, to \$44,736,000,000 in 1916; that of Germany and Austria-Hungary in the same time from \$9,808,000,000 to \$21,002,500,000; a grand total of \$66,338,000,000 in 1916. Two years of this war have cost ten times as much as four years of the Civil War. The daily cost of the war now approximates \$100,000,000, of which the Allies are spending two-thirds, or \$67,000,000, and the Teutons and Turks, \$33,000,000.

Whenever any two fishermen of this section of Idaho return from a trip with an aggregate accredited catch weighing more than 416 pounds, they will be entitled to lay claim to having surpassed the record of Arthur Hadley and Hugh McCown of Star, Idaho. Just how many more pounds of fish than this these gentlemen caught they have not stated. Their remarkable record is pretty fully explained when it is made known that in the past few days they hooked out of the Snake River two sturgeon, one of which weighed 305 pounds and the other 109 pounds. The larger of the two piscatorial monsters measured nine feet and six inches.

As the result of the test conducted at the Springfield Arsenal the Colt automatic gun will be accepted by the War Department if there are any more emergency purchases of machine guns. It was demonstrated at the test that the Colt automatic is a dependable machine gun. It has not many of the late improvements of other guns of this type, but in the endurance test it made an excellent showing. In this test of 15,000 rounds the gun jammed only six times. It fired altogether 20,000 rounds with excellent results. It is understood that the Colt auto-

matic gun will be purchased by the Government if there are any deficiencies in the supply of machine guns for service on the border.

The smallest money order ever issued by the local post-office was made out at Grass Valley, Cal., by Clerk E. F. Whiting, who has had many years of experience in that work. A woman had received a debit statement from a mail-order house notifying her that she was in arrears to the amount of 2 cents. Indignant and unable to realize the spirit that would prompt anyone to mail a bill for 2 cents, the woman decided that a postage stamp would not suffice and that only a money order would indicate to the firm how she resented their action. The fee on the order was 3 cents and the postage necessary to carry it to its destination cost 2 cents more, so that with the 2 cents postage that carried the bill to the woman, 7 cents was expended in collecting the 2-cent delinquency.

In an attempt, he said, to emulate Huckleberry Finn, Peter Scheutten, the seventeen-year-old son of Mrs. Peter Scheutten, of Santa Venetia, Cal., became so troublesome that he was sentenced to serve sixty days in the county jail. That was three weeks ago, after Peter had painted the family cow so as to resemble a zebra, thrown rubber down the chimney, placed salt in the sugar bowl and fed the horse sawdust instead of bran. On recommendation of Justice of the Peace W. F. Magee, who sentenced him, Peter was admitted to parole recently. Within an hour after he was liberated Peter had smeared mustard on his mother's pillow, sold her \$50 deer hound for 25 cents and bought candy with the quarter, picked a live chicken and removed a bolt from the family buggy, so that it collapsed when his mother started for a drive.

Hear the sad tale Philip Voorhis, bachelor farmer, of Eastford, Conn., tells. In a Rochester, N. Y., newspaper he read an ad. A lonely young widow of that city yearned for a good, true husband. Voorhis answered the ad., and, he avows, got a reply. All that was needed was \$18, and she would hurry to Eastford, meet him, perhaps happily mate with him. As it happened all her available funds were tied up in a stock deal. Gladly Philip sent the \$18. He met the train the widow named; he awaited several trains—no widow tripped out from one of them, nor even fell, stumbled or was thrown out. At Philip's mournful request, the police investigated. They learned that at the two addresses in Rochester the widow gave had lived a man whose wife received numerous letters. The Rochester police say Philip's anticipated mate is known variously as Mrs. Hatch, Mrs. Mack and Mrs. Loevere.

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Good Current News Articles

Indiana celebrated the centenary of its admission into the Union this summer, and Illinois, Missouri, Mississippi, Alabama and Maine will have similar observances within the next five years. Illinois celebrates in 1918 at Springfield, Chicago and Vandalia. Mississippi will be 100 years old in 1917, Alabama in 1919, Maine in 1920 and Missouri in 1921.

E. S. Miller, a member of the National Association of Bookkeepers and owner of several hundred stands of bees near Valparaiso, Ind., has been sued because, it is alleged, some of his bees flew to the home of Raymond Austin, a farmer nearby, and stung the livestock, poultry and children in addition to usurping a water tank. It is asserted in the complaint that if the bees had been properly cared for they would not have done this. Austin asks a restraining order that will prevent Miller from keeping the bees so near to the farmer's farm. Damages of \$500 also are asked.

Commander Charles N. Robinson, R. N., in a recent description of the British monitors, states that just below the surface the sides are made to bulge out some ten feet and then to curve in. A torpedo striking this bulge will explode amidst a variety of substances, and in all probability will do no damage to the hull. The system has been applied also to some of the old cruisers and to many new ships, including mine sweepers. The armament of the new monitors, by the way, consists in some of 14-inch guns, in others of 9.2 and 6-inch guns, while others carry only the 6-inch.

The Pelican Portage gas gusher, 170 miles north of Edmonton, Alberta, Canada, has given off daily for sixteen years an average of 4,000,000 feet of natural gas. The well was struck in 1898 and has never shown signs of diminishing. Attempts made to cap it have proved futile, the enormous pressure, some 600 pounds to the square inch, blowing off all valves.

At one time a company was formed to pipe the gas to Edmonton, but was refused a franchise. Recently public-spirited men subscribed \$10,000 to drill for gas near the city's limits. They struck a flow about equal to the daily output of the Pelican. This will be piped to Edmonton and, now that the venture has proved successful, the men who furthered it will be reimbursed by the city. So it appears the great gusher at the Pelican is doomed to waste its unestimated millions. The only beneficiaries from it are the men of two oil-drilling outfits in the vicinity who have piped a line from the gusher to their workings. Indians occasionally camp in the neighborhood and as the gas seeps through the ground they merely heap up a pile of stones over some crevice, touch a match and cook their simple food. It is always warm near the blaze even in below zero weather, so that men sleep about it in the midest of air while a few hundred feet beyond is bitter cold.

Grins and Chuckles

Briggs—I can see why an aviator shouldn't have any sense of humor. Diggs—Why? Briggs—Because it would affect his gravity.

Miss de Boney (school teacher)—I am informed that you loudly spoke of me on the public streets as an old maid. Bad Boy (much scared)—N-o-o, ma'am. I said yer mother was an ole maid.

"Do you think they approved of my sermon?" asked the newly appointed rector, hopeful that he had made a good impression. "Yes, I think so," replied his wife. "They were all nodding."

Francis—This dog, madam, would be cheap at \$100. Lady—I would take him but I'm afraid my husband might object. Fancier—Madam, you can get another husband much easier than a dog like that.

Mrs. Jones—Oh, dear, I have just broken my new smelling bottle! Mr. Jones—It is like you! All your belongings are either broken or shattered. Mrs. Jones—Quite true, John! Even you are a bit cracked!

Mr. Grump (a savage bachelor)—I don't see why a man should get married when a good parrot can be bought for \$25. Miss Readywitt—As usual, we women are at a disadvantage. A grizzly bear can't be bought for many times that.

"Is your town improvin'?" "Yep," answered Bronco Bob. "The figures show that the tone of Crimson Gulch is improvin'. The population has decreased 30 per cent in the last year, and I don't know of anybody whose absence wouldn't be a benefit."

A TELLTALE VISION

By Kit Clyde:

John McDonald, a well-known itinerant peddler, had, on a dreary winter evening, attended a rustic wedding and merry-making at the "farm town" of Assynt, where, among the fair damsels assembled, he had contrived to considerably lighten his pack. No one had observed him leave, and for a month afterwards nothing was heard of his movements. His absence excited no surprise among the country people, as it was supposed that he had gone to visit his relations who lived in Rossshire. They, however, ignorant of his movements, and seeing him only at distant intervals, were of course not troubled at his customary absence, and the peddler might have been away much longer before any suspicion could have been excited.

But exactly four weeks after the festivities at Assynt, a farm servant, passing a deep and precipitous turn on the mountain road which lies between the farm-town and the Clachan of Assynt, observed by the imperfect dawn-light a bundle floating upon the top of the water, then unusually low and clear. A rude raft was constructed, and with his aid the neighbors dragged the corrupted body of a human being to the shore. Though much decomposed, all who were present immediately recognized the body of the missing peddler. The clothes were the same which he had worn when last seen, but the pockets had been carefully turned out and rifled, and nothing of any value had been found on the corpse.

Notwithstanding these suspicious appearances, the simple people, among whom a murder had never been committed, concluded that the unfortunate man had fallen accidentally into the tarn. So confirmed were they in this opinion that they once buried the body, and John MacDonald and the tragedy connected with him were in a fair way of being forgotten. The parish minister, however, had accidentally learned of the discovery, and he forthwith forwarded information to the proper authorities. The sheriff of the county and the public prosecutor immediately came down to the district and commenced a searching investigation.

Under the guidance of John Cameron, the schoolmaster—who was recommended to them by the minister as a skilled and trusty person on whom perfect reliance might be placed—and accompanied by the medical men of the island, the sheriff visited the spot where MacDonald's body had been buried. It was disinterred in his presence, and on examination several deep wounds were discovered on the back of the head, any one of which, the doctor reported, would have been sufficient to cause death. Coupled with the fact that the clothes had been plundered, no reasonable doubt could remain that a murder had been committed.

It was well known in the island that MacDonald, who had made considerable money, carried his for-

tune on his back—banks and stock being unknown institutions to those primitive people.

But for many days all the ingenuity of the law was baffled to obtain any trace of the murderer. No one had been seen with MacDonald after he left Assynt; no article of any kind could be identified as his property.

The search appeared fruitless. Several murders, however, had been recently committed in the northern counties; they had remained unpunished; it was therefore a matter of much public importance that in this case an example should be made. The sheriff established himself en permanence at a roadside hotel in the vicinity, and announced his determination to examine every resident in the island.

During these investigations the sheriff was invariably accompanied by Cameron, who, through his acquaintance with the Gaelic tongue, and his knowledge of the inhabitants, proved of great assistance as an interpreter. One morning, however, the sheriff went down to the district post-office alone, Cameron being for the first time absent. During a desultory conversation the postmaster incidentally stated that soon after the date of the murder he had given change of a ten-pound Bank of England note to a person whom he did not think should have had so much money in his possession.

Who was this?

John Cameron, the schoolmaster.

Cameron was sent for, was asked how he came to have the money in question, and peremptorily denied any knowledge of the transaction. His statement, though made without apparent embarrassment, excited suspicion, and he was arrested, charged with the murder.

For some time, however, no facts appeared to confirm the suspicion. Cameron's house, which stood on a hillside by itself, was minutely searched, but none of the peddler's property was found in it. His sister, who lived with him, was evidently perfectly ignorant and innocent. She was a young and pretty girl, and for her station in life, intelligent and cultivated. When told of the charge she indignantly refused to believe that her brother was guilty, and in deep distress followed him to prison.

One or two casual incidents, however, of which she spoke, proved of unhappy importance on the trial. Even then, however, though well aware of the fatal effect of her answers, she spoke fearlessly and truthfully—with Spartan-like honesty meting out her brother's doom. A fearful dilemma, indeed—one where even falsehood cannot be rigorously judged, but where stern and rigid truth cannot be too highly esteemed. A noble Highland heroine, with her bloodless lips and white, tearless face—all honor to the gentle womanhood that is yet too noble in its maidenly honesty to tell a lie!

Cameron, though unable to account satisfactorily for the money, was on the point of being liberated, when a singular incident occurred.

A workman, McLeod by name, had on three successive occasions dreamed that he had seen Cam-

eron follow MacDonald to the waterside, strike him a number of heavy blows with a hammer, rifle his pack, cast his body into the tarn, and conceal the articles he had taken in a cairn near his own house. The story was soon bruited about, and the dreamer was brought before the sheriff.

So strong and vivid, he said, was his recollection of the incidents of the dream that he could undertake to point out to the criminal officer the exact stones under which the property was concealed. They went together, and ultimately discovered the articles in question concealed under several large stones, which McLeod declared exactly resembled those impressed on his memory.

Here was an important fact to begin with—the property of the murdered man found in the immediate proximity to Cameron's home.

Next day another link was obtained.

A week or two previous to his apprehension, Cameron walked, one rainy morning, to the other side of the island, got wet, and at a country inn obtained from the landlady a pair of stockings, leaving his own behind to be dried. These were now produced, and, after some hesitation, a cotter's wife declared that, from a peculiarity in the work, she could depose that they were of her own making, and added that the day before his disappearance the peddler had bought two pairs from her for his own use. That now producer was one of them; the other was discovered in Cameron's house.

A variety of similar circumstances gradually came out, and, after considerable delay occasioned by the difficulty of the case, Cameron was brought to trial.

The trial took place at Inverness. It lasted from ten o'clock on the first morning of the assize till the same hour next day—twenty-four consecutive hours, during which time the judge, jury and spectators sat uninterruptedly. The prime interest to the superstitious Highlanders lay in the mysterious fact of the vision, and the seer was an object of interest when he entered the witness-box. He suffered a severe cross-examination from the prisoner's counsel, without the substantial value of his evidence being affected. No one who heard his examination could doubt that he was stating what was actually true; no one could believe (and this, of course, was the object of the cross-examination) that he himself was the criminal, or in any way implicated.

It was a protracted and difficult case of circumstantial evidence. The candles (gas was not used in those days) which had lighted them in their vigil through the long autumn night were extinguished and the sun was high in the heavens when the jury returned into court, finding the prisoner guilty as libeled. The verdict had been recorded and sentence of death pronounced, when Cameron (who preserved throughout the trial the most profound composure) arose and with the utmost solemnity and calmness called to God to witness that he was a murdered man.

The sheriff—to whose exertions the success of the prosecution was mainly to be attributed—was

making his way to his hotel through the excited crowd, when a message came to him from Cameron, requesting to see him. When he reached the cell Cameron, who still manifested the same complete composure, at once said:

"I am now going to tell you what I have never breathed to mortal man: the verdict was quite right—I did the deed."

He then made a full and detailed confession, relating the whole story with perfect frankness—a demeanor he preserved till his execution.

The murder, he said, was committed on the night of the Asynt wedding. He had seen MacDonald leave; had followed him unobserved; had made up to him, and walked along with him to the tarn; then, with a heavy hammer which he was carrying home, he had struck him several blows from behind, and, after rifling the corpse, had thrown it into the water.

For some weeks it had remained at the bottom—at least, he could see nothing of it, and he had gone once or twice every week to look for it. The evidence of McLeod surprised and startled him. The property had been hidden the same night—a dark, wet, misty night—immediately on his return home; and it was impossible, he thought, that McLeod, with whom he was merely acquainted, could have come by his information in any natural way.

The fact is curious, and may furnish a problem for those who are curious in psychological mysteries. The murder had, of course, been the main topic of interest in the island for many weeks—it had no doubt become strongly impressed on McLeod's imagination; some slight link of fact, a word or gesture, probably existed, and out of these inchoate materials the story might gradually shape itself into a form not unlike the actual, because a natural and logical arrangement of the whole facts known or surmised at the time.

And, going on with the story to its close, the dream would accompany the murderer after the commission of the crime, depict his horror and contrition, his frantic desire to put away from him any evidence of the accursed deed which lay heavy on his soul. The place where he concealed the property was that he would naturally select—out of his own house, indeed, but not so distant from it but that the articles might easily be recovered after the first dread had been subdued.

People who have disenchanted the unseen, and who consider a man's muscle the best part of him, will probably explain the mystery in some such way. "The light of common day" has become too strong for the supernatural.

G. L. Bogart has computed that a clock in his home, Bellefontaine, O., which has been in the family for seventy-five years, has cost \$168 to keep wound up if the time required was figured at only \$2 per day and allowing only two minutes for each winding operation.

FROM ALL POINTS

PONY'S LITTLE COLT.

The smallest colt ever seen in Elwood, Ind., has just been foaled by Ruth, a skating pony, owned by James Benefiel, which appeared for several years in vaudeville theatres. The colt is twenty-three inches high and weighs twenty-three pounds. It is active and apparently normal.

41 WIDOWS IN LITTLE TOWN.

Georgetown, a place of about 500 inhabitants near the Harrison-Floyd County line, Indiana, has for some time been noted for the number of its widows. A census was taken recently by some curious person, who said the town now has forty-one widows. Most of them are comparatively young and live in comfortable homes.

FISH ON LINE FIRES GUN.

Richard O'Neil, twenty-five years old, of Courtland, Kan., was injured in an unusual accident when fishing. He had a small rifle with him. He fastened his fishing pole to a stake and was loading the rifle when a fish caught the hook and pulled the line rapidly through the reel. The line became tangled in the gun and discharged it, sending a bullet into O'Neil's leg.

REMARKABLE EDUCATIONAL FEAT OF TWO OREGON GIRLS.

Betty Schafer, 13, and Jane Campbell, 14, translated, a few days ago, a 200-word composition into Latin after only seven days' instruction. Dr. Berle is employing the services of the two girls to show the pedagogical classes at the university the time that can be saved in teaching.

Seven days before neither girl had ever studied any Latin. In the composition submitted there was not a mistake in vocabulary or position and the other errors were very few. The translation called for the use of the first and second declension.

"The secret lies in teaching the pupils to associate," Dr. Berle said. "I started Jane and Betty by having them learn the vocabularies through looking up every English derivative. When we came to the word 'magnus' they went to the dictionary and found 'magnanimous,' 'magnificent,' 'magnify' and so on. Those girls will never forget that 'magnus' means 'great.'

"As a result these girls know their vocabularies. The trouble with the average person is that they cannot collect together what they already know. Every subject studied should be made to co-ordinate with what one is studying in other lines."

COUPLE WERE MARRIED 72 YEARS.

Mr. and Mrs. G. W. Nutt, of Clinton, Mo., were married seventy-two years ago in Ohio, the State of their nativity. She is ninety-one and he near ninety-two years old. After their marriage they spent some time in Illinois.

They have 135 descendants, nearly 100 living, including several great-great-grandchildren. They are the parents of twelve children.

Nutt has always had poor health, but his wife, despite the fact that a few months ago she slipped on the ice when carrying coal and broke her hip, moves about with the assistance of one crutch.

Since she has not been able to walk so well her fingers have been busy piecing numbers of quilts and quilting them with the dainty stitches only possible to the women of the old school of needlework.

These she has on sale. She only uses her glasses to sew and read with. Since Mr. Nutt retired from his business—stock raising—he has kept busy with odd jobs, and until this season had a garden that was the pride of Clinton. Not enjoying an idle moment, he also begged his neighbors to let him help with theirs.

When they were married Nutt made but \$13 a month.

NEW GIANT LINER.

Notice was received recently from Liverpool that the British Admiralty has handed over the steamship Statendam, which was purchased on the slips at Belfast from the Holland-America Line for \$5,000,000 shortly after the beginning of the war, to the Cunard Steamship Company. She is being fitted out to carry freight between this port and Liverpool, and will be called the Neuretania. Cunard officials in Liverpool say the new steamship will have cargo space for 21,000 tons, the largest amount of freight ever shipped from America on a single vessel. After the war is over the Neuretania will be fitted out for the passenger trade on lines similar to the Cunarder Aquitania.

The new liner is 740 feet long, 86 feet 4 inches beam, 43 feet 4 inches depth of hold, and her gross tonnage is 32,500. She has two masts and three funnels, and is equipped with triple screws driven by two reciprocating engines and one low pressure turbine in the center, giving her an average speed of 19 knots.

No date has been fixed for the first trip of the Neuretania to New York on account of the delay in getting work done in the Harland & Wolff shipyard at Belfast, as everything else has to be set aside when a warship comes in for repairs, which happens frequently.

INTERESTING ARTICLES

DREAM REVEALED GOLD.

William Heil of Brickerville, Pa., asserts that a dream revealed to him the hiding place of a can of gold, the property of John Belleman, his predecessor on the farm.

Belleman did not believe in banks and secreted his money. He died suddenly and did not reveal even to his wife where he had it secreted.

Heil's story is that he had a dream that he was digging for Belleman's money in the haymow of the barn. He was about to give up the task, when the spirit of Belleman appeared and commanded him to dig on.

The next morning he went to the haymow, dug under the hay and found a tin box. He took it to the home of Mrs. Belleman, who counted the contents, \$5,000 in gold, and Heil was handsomely rewarded.

MAN FIGHTS JELLYFISH.

G. H. Wilson lies at the Cottage Hospital in a critical condition. He had a life and death struggle with a huge jellyfish. Four hundred feet from shore, off Serena, Wilson, who is senior partner of the firm of Wilson & Schwab, automobile men of Santa Barbara, Cal., was suddenly attacked.

He saw before him what he says looked like a great sheet of butter and eggs. Suddenly the strips of yellow and white began to separate from the mass and extend toward him. He turned to swim out of reach when the creature threw its tentacles about him and the mad fight was on. In the struggle Wilson broke the mass into fragments, but reached the shore exhausted, and his face and shoulders stinging as though from scalds.

At the hospital it was said that the patient is getting along favorably. His pain at times was so intense that morphine had to be administered. His shoulders and face resemble one mass of poison oak burns.

BROKE SNAKE RECORD.

A rattler, a king snake and a gopher dwelt in peace and amity the other day in a small box. They were put in the box on the ranch of Capt. J. U. Henry in the Malibu Mountains and brought to Los Angeles by Mayor Sebastian.

The jolting en route did not appear to disturb their snakeships, and they did not even seem to be unfriendly when they were deposited at the police station and later transferred to the Park Department for the city zoo.

The Mayor caught the snakes himself on the ranch.

"It can't be did," was the solemn opinion of the oldest resident in the Malibu when Mayor Sebastian

declared he was going to bring the snakes to Los Angeles and have them put in the zoo in Griffith Park. "Gophers and rattlers and kings never dwell peaceable like, and what's more, they never will."

Unconvinced, the Mayor tried the experiment. He reported there was nothing but harmony in the snake box all during the journey.

NEW YORK CITY'S BIGGEST FLAGPOLE.

Mention was made in the *Sun* the other day of the arrival in Hoboken of a flagpole 165 feet long, which Joseph T. Lilly, president of the Norton-Lilly Steamship Company, intended to set up at his country home at Northport, L. I. Four large flat cars were used to carry what it is said will be the tallest flagpole along the Atlantic coast from the place where it was found near Tacoma, Wash.

Mr. Lilly is proud of his new flagpole, and well he may be in view of the time, trouble and money expended before the right piece of timber was found. The search for it took two months. It was taken from the virgin forest, and the tree, an Oregon fir, from which it was shaped was 300 feet high. Besides being beautifully grained, the pole possesses the added distinction of not having a knot on one side of it.

A pole of such height requires a big flag, and Mr. Lilly ordered one 30 by 50 feet. The height of the pole and the size of the flag would be sufficient to enable Old Glory to be seen miles away, but the site of the flagpole on a hill 200 feet above the sea level adds to its conspicuousness.

So much for Mr. Lilly's flagpole. It appears to be the tallest in this vicinity. But there is one staff that runs a close second to Mr. Lilly's. It is the flagpole in Battery Park.

The Manhattan pole is 109 feet long, but only 100 feet of it shows above ground. Its height is, however, increased by the addition of a topmast, the combined height of the pole and topmast being 156 feet. The size of the New York flag excels. That on the Battery pole is 40 by 60 feet, each stripe being a yard wide.

The Battery flagpole is of further interest because it was originally the mast of the cup defender Constitution, built to race the Shamrock II. When the yacht was sold by the syndicate which built her to a New York firm to be broken up the city bought the topmast and foot base for \$600.

The weight of the great pole is 5,000 pounds, while the topmast weighs approximately 800 pounds. The diameter of the pole at the foot is 22 1-3 inches, while at the top it is 14 1-2 inches. The diameter of the topmast at the foot is 12 inches and at the top 3 1-2 inches.

NEW SURPRISE NOVELTY.



Foxy Grandpa, Mr. Peewee and other comical faces artistically colored, to which is attached a long rubber tube, connected with a rubber ball, which can be filled with water, the rubber ball being carried in the pocket, a slight pressure on the bulb causes a long stream, the result can easily be seen.

Price, 15c.
Postpaid.

Wolff Novelty Co., 29 W. 26th St., N. Y.

THE BUCULO CIGAR.

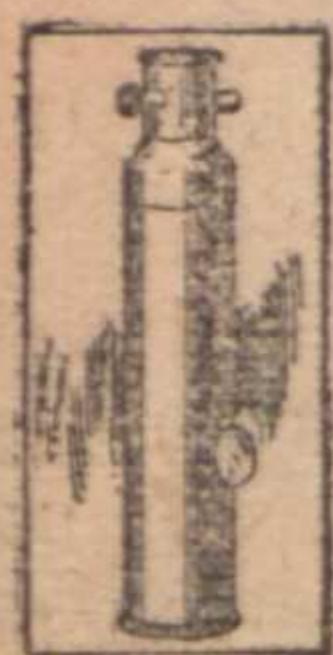


The most remarkable trick-cigar in the world. It smokes without tobacco, and never gets smaller. Anyone can have a world of fun with it, especially if you smoke it in the presence of a person who dislikes the odor of tobacco. It looks exactly like a fine perfecto, and the smoke is so real that it is bound to deceive the closest observer.

Price, 12c. each, postpaid.

Frank Smith, 383 Lenox Ave., N. Y.

SURPRISE MOVING-PICTURE MACHINE.



It consists of a small nickelized metal tube, 4½ inches long, with a lens eye-view, which shows a pretty ballet girl or any other scene. Hand it to a friend who will be delighted with the first picture, tell him to turn the screw on the side of the instrument, to change the views, when a stream of water squirts in his face, much to his surprise. The instrument can be refilled with water in an instant, and one filling will suffice for four or five victims.

Price, 30c. each by mail, postpaid; 4 for \$1.00.
C. Behr, 150 W. 62d St., New York City.

THE CANADIAN WONDER CARD TRICK.

Astonishing, wonderful, and perplexing! Have you seen them? Any child can work them, and yet, what they do is so amusing that the sharpest people on earth are fooled. We cannot tell you what they do, or others would get next and spoil the fun. Just get a set and read the directions. The results will startle your friends and utterly mystify them. A genuine good thing if you wish to have no end of amusement.

Price by mail, 10c.

H. F. Lang, 1815 Centre St., B'klyn, N. Y.

BLACK-EYE JOKE.

New and amusing joker. The victim is told to hold the tube close to his eye so as to exclude all light from the back, and then to remove the tube until pictures appear in the center. In trying to locate the pictures he will receive the finest black-eye you ever saw. We furnish a small box of blackening preparation with each tube, so the joke can be used indefinitely. Those not in the trick will be caught every time. Absolutely harmless. Price by mail 15c. each; 2 for 25c.

Wolff Novelty Co., 29 W. 26th St., N. Y.

THE BOTTLE IMP.

The peculiarity of this little bottle is that it cannot be made to lie down, and yet by simply passing the hand over it, the performer causes it to do so. This trick affords great amusement, and is of convenient size to carry about..... Price, 10c.

C. Behr, 150 W. 62d St., New York City.

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You can conquer it easily in 8 days, improve your health, prolong your life. No more stomach trouble, no foul breath, no heart weakness. Regain manly vigor, calm nerves, clear eyes and superior mental strength. Whether you chew or smoke pipe, cigarettes, cigars, get my interesting Tobacco Book. Worth its weight in gold. Mailed free. E. J. WOODS, 228 M, Station E, New York, N. Y.

GREENBACKS

Pack of \$1,000 Stage Bills, 10c; 3 packs, 25c. Send for a pack and show the boys what a wad you carry. C. A. NICHOLS, JR., Box 90, Chili, N. Y.

\$ 2 to \$500 EACH paid for hundreds of old Coins. Keep ALL money dated before 1895 and send TEN cents for New Illustrated Coin Value Book, size 4x7. It may mean your Fortune. CLARKE COIN CO., Box 95, Le Roy, N. Y.

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MAMAS.

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